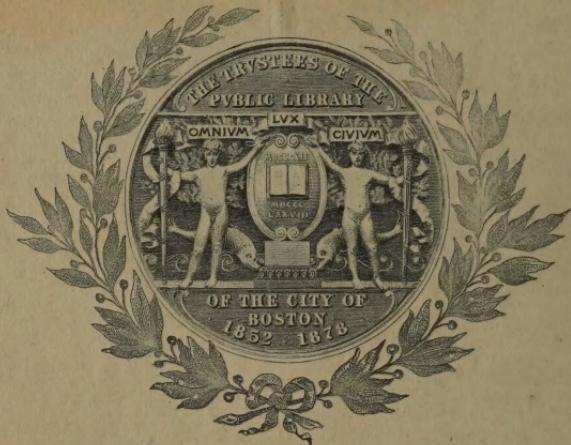




No 4046.337

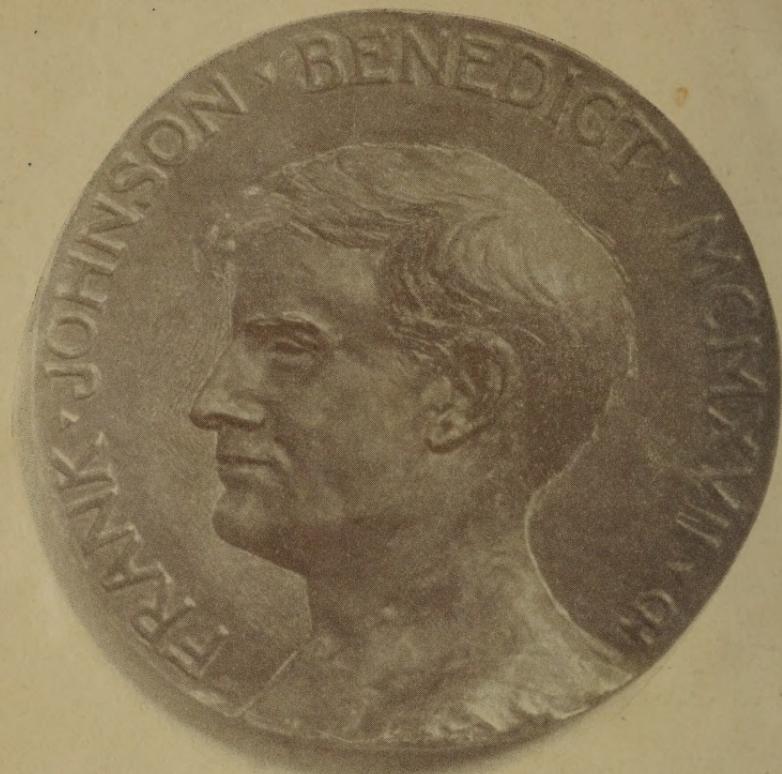


Bought with the income of  
the Scholfield bequests.









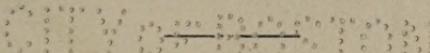
FRANK J. BENEDICT  
FROM A BAS RELIEF  
By Harriet Dawson

A  
SCIENTIFIC SYSTEM  
OF  
VOICE CULTURE  
WITHOUT EXERCISES

4046.337



VOCAL MYTHS AND SUPERSTITIONS ELIMINATED BY  
METHODICAL APPLICATION OF CORRECT PHYSICAL,  
PSYCHOLOGICAL AND MUSICAL PRINCIPLES, WITH  
COMPLETE AND DEFINITE DIRECTIONS OF A  
PRACTICAL NATURE.



By FRANK J. BENEDICT

---

THE JOHN CHURCH COMPANY

Cincinnati

New York

London

THE HOUSE DEVOTED TO THE  
PROGRESS OF AMERICAN MUSIC

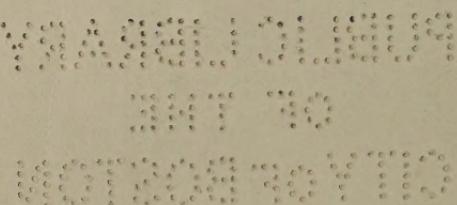
8994

*Schol.*

*Mar. 30. 1920*

*J*

Copyright MCMXIX by  
THE JOHN CHURCH COMPANY  
International Copyright



DEDICATED TO  
FRANK X. ARENS

Whose deep and eminently successful researches in Voice Culture have formed both the inspiration and the technical basis of the present effort, in grateful acknowledgement.



# CONTENTS.

---

---

PREFACE

INTRODUCTORY

Vocal Technique

CHAPTER I.

Fallacies of Exercise Practise

CHAPTER II.

The Business of a Method

CHAPTER III.

Breath Control

CHAPTER IV.

Initial Vowels

CHAPTER V.

Initial Consonants

CHAPTER VI.

Intermediate Vowels and Consonants

CHAPTER VII.

Final Vowels and Consonants

CHAPTER VIII.

Artistic By-Products of the System

CHAPTER IX.

The Business of a Lesson

CHAPTER X.

Application of the System by Teachers

CHAPTER XI.

Application of the System Without a Teacher



## PREFACE



THE spirit of our time embraces two ideals which have hitherto been in opposition. Master minds have been content to align themselves with either of two mutually hostile groups. There were idealists who dwelt in the realm of dreams and who concerned themselves not at all with the obvious fact that their beatific visions never came to anything. Theirs was the land of many buds but few blossoms and less fruit. Opposed to these were realists, men of action and of technical skill in action, who were noted for their ability to bring things to pass. They were rich in brain and will power but busied themselves only with ideas which had been handed down from father to son for ages, or with the mental overflow of their more imaginative brothers. Thus it came about that trade followed the missionary and that inventors, actors, singers, painters and poets ate seldom and sparingly.

But times have changed. The dreamer and the doer have become one and the combination is a great success. It has remained for our day to develop the inventor whose wife finds a check for sixty-five thousand dollars in the pocket of a discarded waistcoat, the loss of this trifling sum having escaped notice. In the old days the minstrel paid for his dinner with a song recital and was subsequently kicked down stairs or not, at the discretion of his noble patron. The yearly earnings of his modern brother would have bought out a dozen of these antique nabobs and pensioned them for life. The religion of today is expected to do more than poultice one's misery here below and insure a place in the celestial sun, hereafter. The true modern takes the mystic's dream and puts it to practical service in economics, industry and art.

For centuries the world has marveled that God should have placed miraculously beautiful voices in some throats and ugly ones in others. The writer took up the good old habit and marveled, too, for many, many years. Under the old order he would doubtless still be marveling; senselessly, unavailingly, perhaps picturesquely, with one side of his brain, while with the other he piously meditated upon the mysteriousness and inscrutability of the ways in which God did not move, His wonders not to perform. Having been bred under the newer dispensation, the "other" half proceeded to act as follows: Came wonder that such unequal distribution of talent should be permitted by the

All-Wise and the All-Good. Came rebellion against the injustice, all the keener because he was personally numbered among the less fortunate. Came determination to "do" something about it.

The following hypothesis was taken as a working basis. That the world had been mistaken in its belief and that the ordinary voice was not really hopelessly inferior to the miraculous one after all. Evidence in support of this view was eagerly sought. It accumulated rapidly, but was largely negative in character. Turning to the positive, a course of relentless investigation was pursued under the direction of the most brilliant vocal expert of our generation. This continued for years and with inspiring results. Astonishing, incredible things were done with apparently mediocre voices, yet there inevitably remained an elusive, mysterious something which seemed incapable of solution, except under conditions very difficult and, oftener than not, impossible of realization. Even when triumphantly solved the victory seemed transient and liable to reversal without notice. Then came the weary, heart-breaking search for a vocal method which would compass ideal results without demanding such severe conditions. One which would insure permanency of achievement, as well. One which could be "worked" by the tired business man, the nervous and tired woman, the invalid, the aged person or the young child and yet produce art of the finest quality. It simply had to be found. It was the motor, without which all our delicate vocal aeroplane fixings were totally useless. Frantic effort for a score of years failed to reveal any very radical improvement over the best of current systems, and the ideal method seemed as far away as ever, when the key idea—the master-principle—suddenly and most unexpectedly flashed into view. This was about three years ago. In another year it was fully developed and in the past two years has given abundant proof of its ability to meet all requirements, under any and all conditions. It is capable of universal application between the ages of two and seventy and adds not a feather's weight to the burden of life.

It proves, first and foremost, that every voice, no matter how ugly, spoiled or unpromising, may be trained to develop true musical quality. It has proved that the young child, from two years on, may safely receive the full benefit of intensive, scientific voice culture, so that he will later benefit by the cumulative results of artistic and physical development during those golden years of acquisition, years which are considered absolutely essential to success in all other callings. Hitherto this period has been wholly ignored by voice teachers, for lack of such a method as is here laid down. While the pianist or violinist of seventeen or twenty is astonishing the musical world with his technical and artistic finish, the singer is just getting his first informa-

tion about breathing, tone, placement and so forth. Need we look further for an answer to the question: why are there so many fine instrumentalists and so few endurable vocalists?

But this is not the only charge which lies against the conventional vocal method. It is a fact that the work accomplished is so imperfect that the voices of most singers lose their freshness and beauty after about ten years and their subsequent toleration to the public is due solely to their artistic experience and musical ability. Even this tenuous hold is but temporary for they must soon, perforce, make way for younger singers, immature as to art but with fresh and lovely voices. Evidence of the truth of this is embarrassingly plentiful. With few exceptions the lover of vocal art is compelled to the alternative of listening to the musically callow and unripe or to the vocally sere and yellow. This system has already proved that the voice, even in middle or later life will take training quite as successfully as earlier so far as the voice is concerned. Evidence of weakness due to age is wholly wanting.

The opening to the middle aged of a new start in life, vocally, may seem of slight significance to those accustomed to think of art in terms of dollars, and so far as that goes, they may be right. On the subjective side, however, it is fairly teeming with inspiring suggestions. Granting that half of what we are told regarding suppressed desires is true, imagine, if you can, the mental state of one who has earnestly longed for a voice and who, for a life-time, has suffered tragically from its denial, when suddenly confronted with the fact that his long abandoned dream may come true.

On the professional side, the addition of thirty or more years to the life of the singing voice amounts to a revelation. After all has been said in praise of youth and its glorious achievements in the line of technical proficiency, it is only age which can give the refinement of feeling and the delicacy of touch necessary for the understanding and execution of the greatest masterpieces. One must have lived and suffered and enjoyed before their true depth can be appreciated. But by the time these rich and mellow years have come the voice trained by current methods is generally a memory, a regret, which the best intentions on the part of the singer and the greatest sympathy on the part of the audience cannot overcome.

But it is only when we envision the life, the whole life, as the period of vocal study, that we grasp the true meaning of a perfect method of voice culture. It is rarely, indeed, that we hear a singer whose technique, or rather lack of it, is not constantly tripping him up

in his delivery and at the same time playing havoc with his voice. A perfectly trained voice will improve unceasingly and so far as my experience has gone, without end. The method which covers a vocal life of from two to seventy is certainly in a position to do infinitely more than one whose operations are confessedly limited to the few years when superabundant vitality permits the organ to be forced beyond its natural capacity.

One very important field which this method opens has not, as yet, been exploited, owing to the shortness of the singing life. I refer to the use of voices in combination, particularly without instrumental accompaniment. Under present conditions it is practically impossible to find singers who possess the necessary musical skill, combined with voices of absolute beauty, under perfect control. Voice and ear need special training for this work, during a period covering many years. Attempts in this direction have seemed fore-doomed to failure; scarcely worth the effort of a capable director. Every voice must be perfect or his time will be wasted. His time is, in fact, invariably wasted, so far as I have been able to observe. And yet perfect voices will blend at the very first trial, independently of a director's efforts and that blend, dear reader, is a thing of such supernal beauty that it will fairly tear your soul loose from its earthly moorings. No instruments combine as effectively as do perfectly produced voices. To put it mathematically, when two voices are heard together, more than twice as much beauty is realized, while with other instruments it is appreciably less than that; often they actually destroy each other. The literature is rich in splendid examples of the effectiveness of voices in combination both with and without accompaniment. The great masters have done their part but it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that their efforts are as yet largely prophetic. Their compositions still await adequate production.

It is hoped that these lines may induce a mental attitude favorable to the study of the following pages, for without it they will certainly be ineffective. Our whole method of getting at the voice is revolutionary and in many particulars diametrically opposed to existing beliefs and practices. The old dogmas and catch-words are discarded, almost without exception. The student who is not prepared to swear allegiance to the new principle and to abjure all previous conceptions, beliefs and habits of thought, will get nothing of value from the book. It is especially desirable that we keep in view our fundamental supposition that every voice is a "voice;" that they are all alike; at least as much so as the persons who possess them and that the real determining factors in the development and control of the voice are three: correctness (ease) of production, intensive cultivation and time.



## INTRODUCTORY



### VOCAL TECHNIQUE



THE WORD TECHNIQUE suggests an endless iteration of scales, arpeggios and exercises; nerve-racking, ear-torturing, soul-destroying. Add the little word, "vocal," and a portentous list is added. Placement, Breath-control, Resonance, Registers, Poise, Intonation, etc. The pupil is supposed to summon a vision of just the right kind of "Placement." That is, to focus the tone in a certain spot in the mouth, nose or head, without altogether excluding the resonance of other "places" where it is not directly "placed." This "place" is determined by the register chosen, which in turn depends upon the pitch and circumstances. The circumstances vary according to the volume of tone, condition of voice, sentiment of words, and so on. The singer must "blend" the registers at points of cleavage. He must not "carry up too much weight" nor allow the tone to be thin or colorless. In addition he must somehow or other make every word distinctly audible, no matter how large the room or how many able-bodied gentlemen are fiddling and tooting directly between him and his hearers. Yet he is cautioned on all hands to keep "relaxed" and the slightest variation from the pitch will raise a chorus of protest. His voice must never be throaty, nasal, husky or over-brilliant and the crime of crimes is to be caught "working," for perfect ease is indispensable. All this will amount to little unless he has "personality," "magnetism," "refinement," and so on ad infinitum. Ability to meet this formidable array of requirements constitutes "Vocal Technique." It is the province of Voice Culture to supply this and to gradually transform the average, ordinary voice into a miracle of tonal beauty. Provision must also be made for mental and musical development and the formation of a well-balanced and forceful personality. Any system which can efficiently meet this program is certainly not over-described by the word "scientific." Yet I will undertake to put before the reader a system which will insure a faultless vocal technique without introducing any principle which may not be understood and systematically practised by a three-year-old child.

The child, in fact, exemplifies in miniature every vocal requisite with inimitable grace and beauty. But what is implicit in the child

must become explicit by deep and patient study. Then, and then only, can it be adapted to the purposes of art. What the child does instinctively we must do with logical intention and with such unswerving fidelity to a fixed routine that the various actions and reactions shall become subconsciously exact. It is this uniformity, this unvarying iteration, continued through a term of years, which finally transforms the ordinary, average voice into a superb musical instrument, making possible the fine art of perfect singing.

But while ignoring or flouting the old tried and *untrue* methods I must ask a more microscopic attention, perhaps, than the reader has ever given to matters of this kind. There is very little for him to do, but he must do just that; no less and no more; particularly no more. If he will give over frantic strivings for great things and do the few plain and simple things I ask, in a plain and simple way, without speculating as to their probable effect or pondering his chances of "success," I will engage to put him in the way of doing great things and will see to it that he develops a fine voice. This may seem like a rash claim, but there is nothing rash about it. It is a challenge issued with the utmost deliberation and is to be taken literally.

The system here laid down is a radical departure from conventional methods. It is strikingly similar in general trend and spirit to present-day activities in the field of scientific investigation. Minute values, heretofore accounted negligible, have been thrown into the balance. A more accurate survey of the physical, psychological and musical means at our disposal has made possible changes in vocal teaching quite as startling as the realization of the aeroplane and the submarine in the realm of applied science. Round-about and uncertain methods are discarded. Results are constantly verified by a carefully worked out system of tests and checks—an integral part of the routine itself.

Learning to sing by conventional methods is very much like trying to use an ordinary railway track on a mountain side. All goes merrily until the summit is almost reached, when something slips and the passenger suddenly finds himself back where he started from, considerably the worse for his experience. It is this overwhelming tendency to unexpected and inexplicable tobogganing, to constant slumping by even the most gifted singers which accounts for the failure of by far the greater portion of vocal students. The system of tests and checks which will be fully described in later chapters absolutely prevents this. If a slip occurs the fault is promptly corrected by the next consonant in the phrase and the descent into Avernus is checked. Thus the action of the method may be compared to the working of

an "Otis" railway in which the tendency to slip is recognized and guarded against.

By a close study of consonant production these terrors of vocalism have been so tamed that they are no longer to be looked upon as blots on the vocal escutcheon but our very good friends with marked artistic possibilities of their own. So unexpectedly rich have been the results attending this line of investigation, that the temptation to consider the possibility of using them as the basis of a revolutionary method of voice culture, was too great to be resisted. All experiments have pointed unmistakeably in one direction. Any failure or weakness in the practical out-working of the theory has yet to appear.

Revolutionary as is this complete change of base, the artistic possibilities which logically follow are even more amazing. Vocal dogmas long established in the popular and even in the professional mind are shown to be baseless superstitions.

---

## A FEW NOTABLE POINTS OF CONTRAST WITH CONVENTIONAL METHODS

- 1) Existing methods do not undertake the cultivation of any but exceptional voices; that is, voices which by accident (instinct) are already correctly produced.
- 2) Present methods postpone training until about the twentieth year. The severity of the routine thus robs the singer of the years best adapted to the acquisition of technical facility.
- 3) The period of training is seldom extended beyond the thirtieth year. The process becomes so fatiguing that many voices are "old" even before that age.
- 4) Every neighborhood groans under the infliction of scales and exercises, relentlessly practised by conscientious vocal students.
- 5) All vocal writers insist upon the necessity of great physical strength and endurance in the prospective singer. Only the naturally robust are encouraged to try to learn to sing.
- 1) This system, by more thorough treatment, reveals the fact that musical quality is denied a voice, not by nature, but by wrong use. Every voice becomes potentially a singing voice.
- 2) Children as young as four may begin training by this method, not only without danger, but with the greatest advantage in every way.
- 3) So perfect is the balance attained by the new method that nothing less than the abject feebleness of extreme age can dim tonal beauty or interfere with the joy of study.
- 4) No exercises are allowed by the new method. Naturalness of style and freshness of quality are thus preserved.
- 5) This should be regarded as a confession of reprehensible ideas and practices. The most delicate may "endure" the training and may even become strong in the process.

6) The majority of vocal careers are finished by nervous or physical breakdown, due to the cumulative effect of errors, apparently trifling and unimportant in themselves.

7) So marked is the effect of even a slight deviation from absolute perfection in tone production that pupils must "stop" for colds and slight illnesses, losing valuable time and breaking the continuity of effort.

8) Tone-deafness — inability to "carry" a tune is commonly held to be incurable.

6) Perfect tone production is not only without harmful effect but stimulates and builds up the body.

7) So delicately balanced are the various elements of tone production by the new system that incredible ease accompanies the process. Practically no time need be lost through colds.

8) By the new method it is shown to be frequently due to incredibly faulty tone production which is easily corrected, after which a sense of pitch may be systematically cultivated.

We are also justified in expecting greater artistic results from the increased period of study, greater variety of resonance, greater tonal beauty, more perfect control, and a riper development of the art in general.





## CHAPTER I.

### FALLACIES OF EXERCISE PRACTICE

N taking the position I am compelled to take regarding the use of exercises, I realize fully the danger of alienating the sympathy of my readers at the start. This would be a pity, as those I am particularly anxious to reach will be the very ones most likely to have preconceived ideas, not to say emotions, violently antagonistic to my doctrine. It is not that I belong to the numerous company who blurt out their hatred of exercises wherever and whenever the spirit moves them.

My hatred of exercises is of a different sort. As a piano student in Berlin, I practiced finger exercises two hours a day for two years and an hour a day for five years before that, and at least seven years more on vocal exercises, besides having devoted a good share of a life-time to making other people "do" exercises, so I feel sure my readers will acquit me of lightness in the matter. Not that I have any feeling of aloofness from my fellow exercise hater. Anyone who, in the hey-day of his youth, can arrive instantly at a decision which it took me thirty years to reach is not to be patronized by me.

Neither do I wish to under-value students in whom is born a stern sense of duty; a love of struggle, a passion for self-immolation; who pin their faith to the "no smart, no cure" idea. I really believe they are the true elect—the people who somehow manage to get things done. Let us assume, then, that I am addressing those who would be temperamentally disposed to embrace the idea of exercise practice with enthusiasm and end by wasting their youthful years and poisoning their sources of inspiration, as I did.

I can best present my theory of the use of exercises in voice culture by drawing a parallel with piano technique, on account of its greater simplicity. The basic idea of the piano exercise is that it covers the essential principle of certain technical difficulties in concentrated form, enabling the student to work at it in a non-musical, mechanical way. Thus, right at the outset, we run counter to the very first law of musical growth, for music was not developed by any system of "work," but solely by reason of the pleasure the first artist derived from its creation. The "Enjoying Attitude" is therefore the natural attitude.

1. My first objection to exercises, then, is that they flatly contravene the law of artistic development.

**Technical Inhibitions.** 2. The exercise is then supposed to enable the pupil to acquire facility more quickly than if the difficulty were only practiced as casually met with, in pieces, from time to time. This, of course, assumes that the skill acquired in this particular way may be transferred, and applied in a different way; that is, to real music. This assumption totally ignores the law of inhibition. We may not always see why certain inhibitions take effect so powerfully, but that they do take effect must be patent to the most casual observer of human life and action. For instance, a man may be a model of deportment in a vocal studio, and a boor and social impossibility anywhere else. A young lady who is inconsiderate, scatter-brained and altogether impossible as a vocal pupil may be a dream of delight at a social function. A man may speak movingly in church, and go directly home and kill his wife and babies with an axe. A man may sell bibles for a living, be a charming gentleman and at the same time an habitual drunkard. The mentality seems to have partitions, like a house, in which one room may be cold while all the others are warm. Ignoring the more subtle ways in which the transference of skill may be inhibited, I will point out a few of the more obvious ones, which may be verified by any one.

3. During exercise practice, faults affecting tone and style may creep in unnoticed, which will stick closer than the traditional brother. This is especially true in vocal work.

4. The musical feeling of the composition, totally foreign to the exercise, may be so disturbing as to upset all calculations.

**Repetition.** 5. The pupil has always practised the exercise "over and over". Of course. That is the very heart of the exercise idea. A concept of the scale or passage in multiple form is thus established. He comes to think of the group not as ten notes, but as ten times ten notes or a hundred times ten notes, as the case may be. When the passage finally comes up for execution in the music, the unaccustomed grouping takes him by surprise; he hesitates an instant and is lost.

6. In doing the exercise he has always had plenty of time for mental adjustment to the problem in hand. In the piece he must "start" whenever the music decides, which is quite a different matter.

7. Even in the matter of speed, conditions are not identical, for the tempo of real music is bound to vary with the mood of the player.

8. In an exercise, facility increases with each repetition, as a matter of course; otherwise it would be purposeless. This means that the pupil

will fall into the way of not expecting very good results until, say, about the tenth repetition. When suddenly confronted with the necessity of achieving a perfect rendition at the first and only trial, confusion is sure to arise. If they would only let him try it over a few times he would show them! But the most complacent of audiences would hardly allow that.

9. Persistent repetition also tends to mental dulness. With each repetition, the fingers do more and the mind less. As the fingers fly faster the mind grows ever duller until this mental torpor becomes a habit, and the habit finally crystallizes into a condition.

10. This would not be so serious if playing were a matter of fingers, chiefly. The mere up and down of the fingers, however, remarkable as it is, amounts to nothing when compared to the lightning play of the mind in forming concepts of the melody, harmony, rhythm, interpretation, etc. Thus the practice of exercises, while it may help the fingers, which by the way are quite capable of getting on famously without any such help, leads us directly away from our main goal which is mental control and development.

11. But something deadlier still comes from the exercise. After a certain maximum of dulness has been reached by repetition, the mind will revolt, unless perchance the player drops plumb off to sleep. Suddenly it flies away to the new automobile or tomorrow night's party. This cannot fail to occur unless the pupil is an out and out idiot. The lapsing of the mind soon becomes a habit and once in about so often will go off on these little "toots" all by itself, while the fingers race merrily on, like a horse without a rider. The same thing will happen when he is playing real music and again when he is before an audience; only in this case he will suddenly realize the danger, and like a somnambulist rudely awakened, will make a frantic grab for mental poise, topple over, and be in disgrace.

12. This will continue to happen just so long as he practices exercises and the accumulated effect of these shocks to the nervous system will result in chronic stage-fright. The mere thought of playing at a concert gives him a tremor of the nerves. When the concert date is fixed, he will suffer the agonies of that first mental lapse all over again in anticipation, so that when the time comes to play, his nerves will be sadly unstrung.

13. Through practicing exercises, or the repetition of difficult passages, which amounts to the same thing, one comes to look upon

**Loss of Musical Feeling.**

these technical intricacies as something apart from the music, as "stunts". Thus the mechanical side of the art is given priority in the pupil's thought and he comes to look upon music as about the most laborious thing in the world, which it undoubtedly is, when values are misjudged in this way.

14. The sense of duty gradually usurps the place of enjoyment, which alone can feed the fires of art and one becomes a mere musical mechanic. Most professional musicians get into this class, sooner or later, and as they are the usual purveyors of classical music, it is no wonder that the term has become a reproach. It also accounts for the fact that a pig-tailed Miss of seven who lovingly executes "Mama's Pet" waltz can make me quite happy, while seventy solemn gentlemen, all working like beavers for an entire evening, are capable of sending me forth into the night, hopeless and disillusioned.

15. Exercises often discourage or disgust the talented pupils, and render the slower witted preternaturally dull.

16. They skim off the cream of mental and physical elasticity, leaving the pupil soggy when it comes to the actual playing of real music.

17. They blight the natural instincts so that the pupil loses the power to discriminate between true music and mechanical imitations.

18. They constantly hold up the ideal of virtuosity, the curse of the concert stage, and the deadliest foe of true art.

19. They give the pupil a fictitious sense of "progress", leaving him flat and discouraged when he finds out, as he surely will, how little he really knows.

20. They proceed from the utterly false hypothesis that training of muscle rather than mind is the principal need.

21. They lull the pupil to a false feeling of security with regard to technique, discouraging the patient, plodding, note to note canvas of the situation and the critical survey of all the numerous details involved, which alone can develop technical security and brilliancy.

22. Exercises tend to give a mechanical cast to the style, and a monotonous color to the tone, particularly in singing.

23. Even if the pupil could play his little scale or arpeggio in the piece it would not help much, for these things are always changed

## *Fallacies of Exercise Practice*

a little in real music; just enough to disgruntle the faithful devotee of scales and exercises.

24. Whoever invented the exercise idea overlooked the trifling item that the prime factor in technical brilliancy and security, is the preservation of balance; that is, the ability to keep a number of details in mind at the same time, each being given its due share of attention; no less and no more. The very essence of the exercise, concentrating the entire attention on one detail, is violently in opposition to this principle.

25. Last, and by far the most important in my arraignment of the exercise, is the fact, mysterious but indisputable, that the fingers, or any part of the body, will often show greater dexterity in response to artistic than to mechanical intention. For instance, I have known a pupil to flounder and stammer over a passage on which he had evidently been concentrating "all by himself". The treatment would be the application of still greater concentration, one might think, but it will only add to the difficulty of the situation. Give him a suggestion as to the musical effect desired, without any reference to the mechanical imperfection of his rendition, and he will very likely respond with a perfect rendering of the passage. This seemingly inexplicable result is due to the fact that we have replaced the mechanical concept of the passage by an artistic ideal. Had we *called attention* to the imperfection, *mechanically*, of the first rendition, he would, in all likelihood, have been unable to free his mind of the mechanical concept, and the experiment would have failed. We do not know how or why this mysterious faculty came into being, but the fact that it exists is not open to doubt, and it behooves us to proceed in the light of this knowledge. It is the principle upon which the whole structure of musical art rests, and whoever can explain it has solved one of the riddles of creation. However, it is not our business to solve, but to take advantage of the principle in every way possible.

Here we must part company with the fingers, as we are supposed to be discussing vocal technique. I have dwelt at length on piano technique, but every principle holds good, and generally with added force, in vocal work. Exercises are particularly dangerous for singers on account of the possibility of causing serious damage to the instrument, which cannot be replaced.

They almost invariably destroy vocal balance by using a particular part of the voice too much. All the registers of the voice need a certain amount of use. By confining our practice to songs, chiefly, the

## A Scientific System of Voice Culture

danger of using one register too much is reduced to a minimum. The composer, in his distribution of pitches in the composition of a song, is guided by the tradition of centuries. The teacher in making up an exercise has no such clear, infallible guide, and may easily do the voice lasting injury.

Exercises are even less excusable in vocal than in piano work, as will be seen in the discussion of coloratura singing in Chapter VIII. Here there are so many means of production, admirably and specially suited to the purpose, and all intensely alive, that we find ourselves resting securely and comfortably in that mysterious principle of artistic control mentioned above. The pianist has some excuse, in view of the fact that fingers were not primarily made for piano playing. The voice, on the other hand, was most unmistakably built for singing, this act, in some rudimentary form having undoubtedly taken precedence of speech in the order of development.

**Vocal Control  
Instinctive.**

All that we have to do in singing is to make sure that we are using the apparatus in the way nature intended. This is strangely easy, and as a result we see, everywhere, people who have good "natural" voices; that is, persons who have happened to use the voice correctly from birth. That is all very well for the birds and beasts in their native wilds; for the impromptu male quartet, and for Dorothy and her best-beloved it fills the bill on many a winter's eve. All these inherit a sufficiency of skill to answer the purpose, but as years go on, human beings, at least, find life more complex and subtle. Adequate means of emotional expression are supplied by a different style of vocalism; the kind of singing which has earned for itself a place among the fine arts. For this kind of vocal expression none of us is fortunate enough to inherit sufficient skill. We lose facility in tone production as we become more sophisticated in musical matters. The only way to preserve the voice is to learn how to use it and as this greatly improves it, we use the convenient term, *voice-culture*, to describe the process, and the art of singing is usually included under it as well. Special means are also taken to enhance the musical quality and capacity of the organ, and these, too, come under the general head of voice-culture, presenting a well-nigh irresistible opportunity for indulgence of the exercise mania. The vocal mechanism, being so exceedingly intricate, there is simply no limit to the damage possible, and we must always keep our eye on the fact that a new voice cannot be bought, like a new piano.

The teacher's motive in devising an exercise is most laudable. Looking back over the years, he is impressed with the deviousness of the path he has traveled, and he thinks he sees a way across, instead of around; a short cut. But suppose that in that **The Enjoying Attitude.** longer way round the teacher kept the "enjoying attitude", and that his pupil loses it. Don't imagine that because these laws are great and eternal they will not reach you and your small affairs and take instant effect. Ten year old Susan will react to them unfailingly. This "enjoying" law is like a big moving platform upon which we go through our little paces, all unmindful of its existence, until we tumble off and are run over or left behind. *It is the special function and genius of the exercise to push us off this platform.*

In closing I should like to call attention to the fact that I have nowhere said that an exercise should never be given. Under severe and skilled supervision it is not inconceivable that an exercise might be of service. The occasion would need to be very exceptional, however, to justify the experiment, in view of the known risks incurred.

**Why Exercises Are Used.** The demand for exercises in voice work would seem to arise largely from inability or disinclination to face the technical difficulties of a composition. It is a form of mental laziness masquerading as thoroughness, or plain incompetency maneuvering to avoid exposure, in most cases, I imagine. The true inwardness of the exercise system, as applied to voice culture, will be discussed in a later chapter (see page 81). My practice in teaching is to use songs the pupil likes, gradually improving the quality as his musical nature develops. The mere fact that we are thus occupied feeds the artistic fire, and also serves the purpose of preventing a too intense mental concentration on the mechanical features of the work. In using songs in this way we must bear in mind the dangers attendant upon repetition, or we shall fall into the worst abuses of the exercise system. The "over and over" thing is exceedingly dangerous as it sets up a habit, almost sure to result in some form of musical stammering. The pupil may be allowed to try a note a second or even a third time, but between the trials the teacher must make sure that a new concept of the difficulty has been clearly formed in the pupil's mind. The repetition is thus essentially different from the first trial, and so loses its greatest danger. Even so, it will be unsafe to haggle over a note too long lest we destroy the illusion that we are singing the song for the pleasure of it. It is not necessary to finish the song at one lesson, however, and it

will make no particular difference how long we are in getting through it, for no pedagogical principle has been violated. The natural development of all the powers, which goes on at a more rapid pace than might be imagined, in this kind of work, will allow the tempo to be insensibly quickened, from time to time. Between the "times" the song should have a rest of several months or a year, lest the terrifying condition known among athletes as "becoming stale", should develop.

One hard and fast rule may be laid down and it should never, under any circumstances, be broken. Never call for or allow a repetition of a particularly successful demonstration. If indulged, one of two dangers will of necessity have been incurred. Either the repetition will be unsuccessful, in which case all the value attending the first demonstration will have been dissipated and an additional fright incurred, or the effect will have been reproduced at the cost of extra effort. This effort is ruled out of our system on account of its subsequent destructive effects, and on account of its scarcely less harmful immediate result.

**The Enjoying Attitude.** Imagine a large room warmed by two fire-places at opposite sides, one typifying the musical, the other the technical elements of the art. My idea is to tend them both constantly. At times the technical "fire" might receive the lion's share of attention and vice versa, but whichever was occupying my particular attention, I would not forget to keep a watchful eye on the other. The art fire might be allowed to burn quite low while we pokered up the technical one, but we must take good care that it does not die completely out. These fires are terribly hard to start when they are absolutely dead, and when one receives the entire attention it generally begins to act strangely, and is almost sure to repay your over-solicitude by smoking you out. The basic idea of the exercise system is to let one go out while you tinker around the other. Then while you are rebuilding it the first one goes out, and so on, indefinitely.

**Exercises Unnecessary by this System.** In singing a song as described in the following pages, fourteen separate and distinct "exercises" will have been practiced "over and over" without incurring any of the dangers of the over and over system. These vocal problems are covered: Poise, Placement, Resonance, Register Blending, Evenness of Scale, Skips, Lip Flexibility, Jaw Flexibility, Vocal Cord Flexibility, Phrasing, Breath Control, Shading (incidental), Intonation, Ease of Production, Diction, Breath-Storage, Coloratura.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BUSINESS OF A METHOD



HE business of a method is to place the student in such relation to the great, irresistible forces of Nature and Art that his inborn powers shall be developed to the fullest degree. We must, therefore, consider the voice as a mechanical apparatus. This may be conveniently divided into two distinct elements.

1. (a) *The Inner Physical Mechanism.* The various actions and reactions of the larynx, resonating surfaces, and diaphragm which produce tone, have been so long established in the human organism that

**Vocal Mechanism.** their control has passed into the involuntary stage. Conscious thought has no direct part in the actual physical production of a tone, once the apparatus has been set in motion. It only asks to be allowed to do its own work in its own way and, when that condition is met, acts with a definiteness and precision unapproached by any other musical instrument. But this admirable mechanism, while a law unto itself in action, is completely lacking in the power of initiative. It can do nothing until it receives a command from the brain. Once such a command is received, however, it has no choice but to obey. It is the abject slave of the mind.

(b) *The Inner Mental Mechanism* is of the brain, exclusively. Its action is of such ancient origin that it, too, is involuntary. It is the slave of the Will.

*The Will*, which governs the other two, is also a slave. It responds to the promptings of the emotions and desires and whatever mental concepts are to receive vocal expression.

The vocal apparatus, being a part of a living organism, is, of course, subject to incessantly changing demands. As life becomes more highly organized, these tend strongly to interfere with the co-ordination of the various parts of the apparatus.

Thus the whole process is profoundly influenced and even thrown into confusion by the endeavor to make use of it in the tonal representation of musical art. Compared with the pre-historic beginnings of the voice, the art of music is a new thing and the attempt to combine the two brings up new problems of vocal control.

The Will itself must now react to the suggestions of art instead of primitive desire, appetite, etc., and it is not inconceivable that it might, upon occasion, fail to interpret the unaccustomed concept with its usual

definiteness. It is thus thrown into a state of uncertainty and transmits more or less panicky orders to the inner mechanism. The physical, tone-producing apparatus in turn loses its poise and chaos results. The net effect of this is that instincts, actions and reactions imbedded in the race for untold ages are put to rout and disorganized.

The business of a system of voice culture is, of course, to bring these warring elements into harmony. In this, as in all other steps to **Vocal Control,** the vocal Parnassus, we have only one reliance: the **Mental.** reasoning and observing mind. Far more important than a good vocal apparatus is a good thinking apparatus. Mental processes free from emotional admixture must be established. The thrilling tone, so stimulating to the emotions and imaginations of the audience, is not primarily dependent upon the emotion or imagination of the singer. The process of producing it is a purely physical one, subject at all times to the coldly calculated action of a relentlessly analytical mind. The processes of control finally become practically sub-conscious in the singing artist, but at present, and for a few more centuries, probably, it will be found necessary to have them verified and, where necessary, re-established by conscious mental control, if we would avoid the infiltration of fatal error. Concrete, definite physical acts must be performed in a deliberate, calm, studious way. A vocal system must never trust to any other method than the purely scientific. But if the inner vocal mechanism is no longer subject to the control of the conscious mind, how are we to force it to answer the new (artistic) demand. It would clearly be impossible, were it not for the outer mechanism, which has not yet become irrevocably involuntary.

2. (a) *The Outer Physical Mechanism*, consisting of the tongue, lips and jaws, is very uncertain so far as instinctive control is concerned, which is but another way of saying that it is still subject to voluntary control. This is doubtless due to the fact that these vowel and consonant (speech) producing organs are of a later development. Having seen less service, by some thousands, or millions of years, they have not yet reached the absolutely involuntary stage. Under ideal psychological conditions they are unquestionably capable of perfect instinctive control. But when these conditions are unfavorable, as they are certain to be under the added burden of the artistic demand they often act haltingly, or not at all. By way of consolation we have the fact of voluntary control, with which, naturally a vocal system is chiefly concerned.

Our only means of helping the inner mechanism is by protecting it from interference by *extrinsic* muscles, which have no proper part in the vocal process, but which, by spasmotic, panicky action are quite capable of upsetting all Nature's best laid plans. These extrinsic muscles are stirred to action by mistaken but well-meant art motives, such as a desire to sing very grandly or very delicately, or to produce a certain admired quality (imitation). We must first of all quiet these troublesome members, which accounts for the fact that so much of our work is negative in character. It also explains the child's almost complete immunity from this class of vocal troubles.

(b) *The Outer Mental Mechanism* is, of course, the thinking, reasoning brain, upon which we depend for the control of the extrinsic muscles. Its aid is also invoked for the direct, physical control of the lips, jaws and tongue. These slender and apparently feeble means are the only ones which may safely be employed in a vocal method. Other devices, while often temporarily effective, will, in the end produce more trouble than they cure. In view of the fact that all the disturbance is caused by the intrusion of art (the desire for artistic expression) into Nature's simpler plan our first move is plainly indicated.

This is to eliminate the new arrival, the musical element, until such time as the various parts of the vocal apparatus have been re-organized so as to sustain successfully the additional burden. This must, of course,

**Singing "Mania."** be accomplished without recourse to exercises, lest a worse fate befall us. Musical intention appears in a form which may be fitly named "Singing Mania." Just singing, good or bad! The drunkard's craving is as nothing to it. As soon as the pupil gets a smattering of breath control (forced) and an idea of placement (over-placement), he just loves it "to death"; the death of his voice, himself and the innocent bystander. The vocal tarantelle, once begun, will surely go on until not a vestige of true musical quality remains. It matters not to him that the tone is getting thinner and harsher or thicker and duller. He is in the grip of the singing madness, which inhibits, for the time, every other thought and feeling. He becomes a brother to the cat.

This faculty of inhibition, which makes such dire happenings possible, is one of the most remarkable possessed by man. It acts beneficially for the most part, as when it enables one to enjoy a beautiful sunset, regardless of unsightly objects in the immediate foreground. Bearing this in mind, it is easy to see how singers with naturally beautiful voices finally

**Harshness  
of Tone.**

arrive at the production of horrible, even grotesque sounds, without the slightest realization of the fact. Disillusionment must finally overtake them, for the time will come when no one will even pretend to admire their voices. Yet, even in this final stage, they will sometimes attribute their failure to every cause but the right one, stoutly insisting that their voices are better than ever. The other singer was always chosen because of a "pull" and so on. The reader has doubtless often been amazed by the utterly unmusical quality of such voices. It is only habit which gives us the fortitude to endure them at all.

I long ago came to the conclusion that nothing was to be gained by an appeal to the singer's musical nature. He hears himself "darkly" at best, and when in the grip of the singing mania neither thinks, sees, hears nor smells. Moreover, the physical effort finally becomes so great that it shuts out all sensations, except, of course, the joy of singing, which in the end becomes a kind of agony, the transition from pleasure to pain being so gradual as to escape notice. He is like the frog, which will consent to be soundly boiled, if only the temperature of the water be raised gradually enough.

Neither am I optimistic regarding any form of direct cultivation of the vowel, which usually receives the full brunt of the singer's concentration and effort. Results come quickly and appear to be all right

**Effects of Vowel Cultivation.** at first, but are often wanting artistically and are nearly always ephemeral in the extreme. After years of training, the voice will suddenly disappear for no particular reason. Of course, there are plenty of reasons, but they are not revealed by any system of direct vowel cultivation of which I have knowledge. The beauty of the vowel in even a passable voice is so intoxicating that the singer involuntarily falls under the spell of the singing mania and his undoing has begun. The very violence of this passion for song is proof enough of its great value in spiritual cultivation and expression, but it must be trained and disciplined to be of any permanent artistic worth.

My first care, then, is to bar all "singing," *as such*, until the method is well established. A rigid routine is insisted upon from the start and the "joy" is for the time being effectually inhibited. In achieving this control I use no preparatory exercises of any sort, astonishing as that may seem to the average singer. As soon as the pupil breathes correctly, he is launched upon his first song.

Upon the consonants falls the chief burden, not only of vocal control—that is, learning how to sing—but also of the routine of vocal development. These are subjected to severe analysis, not the smallest detail being overlooked or left to chance.

**Consonants as a Basis.** This sounds more formidable than it really is, for while there are numberless ways of producing a musically pleasing vowel, all of them wrong but one, there are but two of producing a consonant; plain right and plain wrong. The right way is simple enough, and easy enough, to be classed as instinctive; the wrong is so excessively unmusical as to be unfailingly recognized, once the attention has been called to it, and its production is attended with great and sometimes painful ef-

**Indefiniteness of Vowels.** fort. Herein stands revealed the first great superiority of consonants over vowels as voice cultivators.

Let ten judges listen to the production of a vowel and you will probably get ten different opinions of its merit.

To this fact is due, I believe, the impenetrable fog in which this whole subject of tone production is enshrouded. One day the voice is splendid, the next impossible. A great voice delights the public, then suddenly disappears, leaving no trace. Sometimes they do not disappear when the "call" comes, which is even more pathetic. Consider, too, the state of a profession in which nearly every teacher secretly or openly looks upon his fellow teacher as more or less of a humbug. Yet I feel sure that no profession has more devoted workers or of greater personal gifts. This striking indefiniteness appertaining to everything vocal has always amazed and fascinated me. Years of intense study and observation only served to augment my wonder and the urge to do something about it increased proportionately. By easy stages I finally came to the conclusion that the clearing of the mystery would be the greatest single service which could be rendered the cause of musical art at this time. However that may be, my solution is cheerfully offered to any who may wish to test it, in the hope that it may clear the atmosphere for them as it has for me.

Cause and cure are usually so closely related as to be practically one; it is so in this case. The cause lies in the richness and variableness of the vowels; the cure in the greater stability of the consonants; a stability due to their inherent nature as already hinted. I therefore discard the vowel as a means of culture and control and concentrate all forces on the intensive cultivation of the consonants. Three months' training will usually suffice to master these and convince the pupil that wisdom lies in letting Nature have her way in vocal technique. Then will be born a new idea; the idea of singing as Nature's own miracle,

in which he is but a humble operative and beneficiary. Once he has grasped the new concept he will hate that old, spurious singing "joy" intensely and his whole attitude will be one of terror lest it return to torment and enslave him.

But we are not through with the singing mania yet, for it sometimes appears in far more subtle form. Long after the pupil has grasped and put in practice all the elements of perfect singing he will sometimes unaccountably linger on the borderland. Errors will persist long after

**Application of Psycho-Analysis.** the time when experience assures the teacher they should have ceased. The singing mania is an old story; it is hated and feared, so far as conscious mentality is concerned. But psycho-analysis teaches us that the unconscious "Hinterland" of the mind is quite capable of controlling our acts to some extent. It may be that in long forgotten years the pupil has suffered keenly from inability to express himself in song. That is, he has had an intense unsatisfied desire to sing, which has left a deep impression on that mental background which holds the hidden springs of otherwise unaccountable action. The subconscious thought or impression still clings to the old, erroneous idea of singing long after the conscious mind has discarded it, manifesting its power in a strange backwardness. Let the pupil understand this and he is cured. Without the aid of the new science we should be inclined to attribute his slowness to stupidity, which would be a great and fatal mistake. Its real cause lies in the super-richness of the pupil's emotional nature which, in turn, is an indication of superiority in other qualities. The loss to art of such a pupil would be a pity, yet might easily happen.

By the beginning of the fourth month the average pupil who has not sung may be expected to have mastered the essentials of tone production. His development into an artist will simply be a matter of putting those principles into practice. The best way to do this is not by slaving on exercises, but by the very simple and obvious one of singing songs; songs he likes; as many of them as he can, year after year, for as many years as he can. This assumes the continuation of lessons in some form, for the songs need to be carefully graded and the rapid changes in the voice itself need to be assimilated. Thus it may be seen that the singer's career after the first three months is literally "one grand, sweet song." It is a process which may, and should, be begun in early childhood and continued to old age. The cultivation of the art in later years would be of great value subjectively, while from the standpoint of abstract results the harvest would make present achievements look extremely

feeble. It is only as a life—an *entire life*—study that voice culture can be expected to yield its highest rewards. At no time during such a sweep of study need it add one feather's weight to the burden of living. On the contrary, it will renew the spirit and increase bodily vigor.

By this it may be seen that my method is radically, even antipodally at odds with existing notions and traditions about voice culture. Either they are wrong and I am right or they are right and I am wrong. The reader's attention is challenged on these terms. By this I do not mean to intimate that my colleagues are not doing good work, but only that if so, they are in advance of their time, which I doubt not many of them are. Neither is it my intention to deny that there are many beautiful voices. There are very, very many of extreme beauty. What I do claim, *and charge*, is that their beauty is largely a matter of accident, as in so-called "natural" voices, where the organ is inevitably short-lived and consequently of no value in art, which is notoriously long. Or, they are natural voices more or less enhanced by some sort of training, good enough to add to their volume, but not good enough to develop their full beauty or a perfect method of production. Failing a perfect method of production the organ will not last long enough to allow it to be combined with great artistic force, which comes, if at all, in later years.

All these methods stand self-convicted of some variety of forcing. The "hard work" motive in them all is enough to show that. They are all in a frantic hurry to get results and show in every line that they

**Results of Conventional Methods.** have no appreciation of the susceptibility of the organ to damage from such strenuousness. Among singers so trained are most of our professionals in church and theater and all except the great stars of concert and opera. Any one who has ever gone into the market for voices knows that lovely organs are rare past thirty and good artistry equally rare under that age. When we meet the two in combination, we are so surprised that we are betrayed into naming it genius. Genius it certainly is not. It means simply that by a fortunate juxtaposition of super-normal conditions they have managed to achieve what is denied normal beings under normal conditions. It is this state of affairs which I protest and for which I have reason to believe the method here laid down will prove a complete, universal and final cure.

There is one and only one logical way to sing. It is so natural, so easy, so astonishingly effective that it can only be described by the word miraculous. It is susceptible of exact demonstration and any

way which differs from the standard thus established in the smallest respect will be attended with increasing effort, will become increasingly unmusical and progressively destructive to the organ.

While all singers and teachers must have experienced this again and again in actual singing, from time to time, it is quite a different thing to practice it habitually and unless practiced habitually accumulation of skill will not result. No method exact enough to be of much value, save to the person originating it, seems to have appeared. All seem to depend upon the magnetism of the teacher to be of any use at all, and then only for certain peculiarly endowed individuals.

A great deal has been said of the "Golden Age" of singing; of the achievements of Garcia, Marchesi and others, but I have good reason

**As to the "Golden Age" of Singing.** to doubt the genuineness of the Golden Age. Great voices there undoubtedly were and it is easy enough to see how they developed, but neither individually nor collectively do they furnish the master key to the vocal mystery, capable of being universally applied with any reasonable expectation of exact results. While I would be the last to deny homage to the great names of the past, I am quite sure that the Golden Age has not yet come and I am not favorably impressed with the methods proposed for its realization.

For one thing, they all start from what I conceive to be a wrong basis: the selection of some supernally endowed individual; development by some unimaginably severe and terrific system of training and a career constantly under the direct patronage of the angels. A golden haze of inscrutability hovers about the personalities of these writers. They somehow create the impression that they were not averse to being classed as quite extraordinary persons. Their pronouncements come from the clouds; such distant clouds that by the time their words reach earth it is not always easy to tell exactly what (if anything) they mean.

For instance, we are all supposed to fall upon our knees and bump our foreheads six times, more or less, once for each year the famous Porpora kept his long-suffering pupil on that famous sheet of exercises.

**Imperfection of Old Methods.** This incident has not the slightest pedagogical interest, except to show that "frightfulness" is no new thing. One is charmed to know that the victim was patient and refrained from chopping the famous Porpora into small bits, but it no more proves the wisdom of the method than John Bunyan's experience proves that the jailing of poets would inevitably result in

masterpieces like "Pilgrim's Progress." It would rather seem to illustrate the indestructibility of human patience when subjected to cruel and unusual punishments.

A famous madame writes a book to tell us how she learned to breathe by multiplying the man behind the French horn by the horn itself and dividing the result by a process so mystifying that the only sure thing about it is that the secret of the discovery will die with the discoverer, and she leaves us in little doubt as to her conviction that a not inconsiderable portion of the vocal art itself will suffer the same fate at the same time. Another great singer writes a book warning us not to learn to play any instrument as the effort will undermine our vitality to the extent of vocal impairment.

The most famous teacher of all is never heard of except in close company with his faithful laryngoscope, his own invention. The laryngoscope is doubtless an invention of great value to the medical profession, but is about as much credit to a vocal teacher as a safe-cracking outfit would be to a doctor of divinity. If this gentleman, who seems to be forever "still living in London at the age of ninety-six," really taught the attack of the tone by a stroke of the glottis, there must have been a brisk market for his invention among his pupils. It is said that he also invented the idea of depressing the back of the tongue by mechanical means, thus enlarging the "calibre" of the voice, artificially, but I hope it is not true. We could forgive him the laryngoscope; he might have come upon that accidentally, in an idle moment; but nothing could palliate that other thing. I speak from bitter personal experience when I affirm that no one who has ever suffered that infliction would believe that it could have been perpetrated by any but an enemy of the race.

Another devotes herself to the child voice in this highly scientific fashion: "The little one may merrily warble about the house. She may learn 'do, re, mi' by the twelfth year." But whether this uplifting instruction is to be imparted by the cook, laundress or chauffeur is not specified. We only know that no vocal teacher is to be allowed near the "gifted little creature." At the age of twelve she becomes so abnormally, outrageously, obnoxiously "delicate" that her vocal cords are "sealed" (with wax, I suppose), only the lightest and airiest diversions being permitted, such as learning French, German and Italian along with a course in mathematics. She is also to cultivate the gentler of the household arts, such as cooking, sewing, mending, and all such odd jobs about the house as might from time to time suggest

themselves. I have always wondered what the gifted little creature was supposed to do with her spare time. She certainly must have been "gifted," combining as she did in that delicate frame, the virtues of the "Heavenly Twins" and the "Gold Dust" pair. She seems to have been allowed to do almost anything save loosen the "seal" on those vocal cords. After this dreamy and languorous period was safely passed, they were to be "unsealed" and taken to the famous madame who, without further ado, was to subject them to "tests" for endurance, range, quality, etc.

In another chapter she solemnly warns us against singing "half" voice as the breath then passes "through" the vocal cords. Where it goes when we are singing full voice is left to the imagination. But she will allow us to sing half voice at rehearsals! When rehearsing, there is presumably no danger of the breath passing through the vocal cords, no matter how we sing. The burden of her song is ever of the weariness of the pupils and her own superhuman patience and endurance. She observes "pallid faces" among her flock and generously provides them with wine, tea, cakes, etc. Every line confesses physical violence to the apparatus and a totally erroneous standpoint, generally.

But we need not go to their books for information on the subject. Look at their pupils! Not the pathetic vocal cripples who apply vainly for the despised "church job," but the great successes; the world-renowned goddesses of song. Some of the saddest moments of my life have been spent in applauding and otherwise poulticing the pride of these self-same goddesses when they had reached the vaudeville stage, or the vaudeville condition, on some more dignified stage. Rasping, thin, harsh tones lacerate the ears and one applauds for pity while the cheeks burn for shame. But why, it may be asked, do these feeble, decrepit old ladies persist in appearing publicly? That is the significant part of the situation. They are seldom more than middle-aged, and as for health, they seem to be troubled by too much rather than too little, if we are to judge by appearances. At the zenith of their powers, mentally, physically and artistically, they are nevertheless vocal bankrupts. It is the same old story of the more humble church singer over again, only, of course, on a grander scale. Somewhere in the training, direct effort has taken the place of Nature's way, and the voice has paid the forfeit.

The only record we have of a singer who sang really well down to a good old age was the great English tenor, Sims Reeves. The reason is not far to seek, for it is related that he would never sing when he

had a cold and had no compunction whatever in disappointing audiences on that account, even at the last minute. I hazard the suggestion that Mr. Reeves may have been one of those heaven-endowed individuals who combine great natural ability with a genius for personal comfort. It would not surprise me a bit to learn that some of those "colds" were very slight indeed, or that they coincided with those nights one likes to think of in connection with a pair of slippers and a good, roaring fire. But whether this conjecture is true or not, it is plain that he would not have forced his voice for all the audiences in Christendom,

**Universal Application of the System.** and we hereby adopt him as our patron saint and will build our method on his plan, taking for our motto: "What cannot be done without

effort, is not worth doing at all." We will strive to capitalize non-chalance and harmonize it with the modern scientific spirit and with principles of the highest efficiency. Success in this will validate the claim that we have here a method comprehensive and exact enough to cover the subject, yet susceptible of universal application, meeting equally the needs of young and old, wise and unwise, strong and weak. It will be our aim to tear away every shred of mystery, eschewing all cloud effects and angelic tutelage. Instead of juggling with celestial constellations, we will get a spade, and call it one, and keep digging until we have found bed-rock and there "hitch our wagon." It is easy enough to go ballooning about among the stars. The voice lends itself all too readily to the esoteric and mystical. For this very reason it behooves us in our method of study to keep close to the bed-rock of scientific exactness, which can alone be depended upon to develop an adequate, safe and enduring technique. The artistic part must not be ignored either, but the voice cannot develop fully, or survive the

**The True Golden Age of Singing.** vicissitudes of actual singing, without a solid technical basis. When such a method is taught to every child in the public schools and to every college student, the Golden Age of Singing will be in the way of arriving, and not before. The art which will develop from such a basis will make our present achievements look like mere beginnings.

## CHAPTER III

### BREATH CONTROL



HEN Rossini said that there were three requisites in the make-up of a great singer: the first, Voice; the second, Voice; and the third, Voice; he stated the exact truth. But we know now what was not known in his time: namely, that almost any one can have a voice who is able to qualify on the following points: first, a Good Method; second, a Good Method; and third, a Good Method. The great master knew the voice well, and recognized the fact that, given a big, sensuously beautiful, thrilling tone, under perfect control, artistic effects are so easily achieved as to be almost negligible.

Possession of such a voice is not, however, the simple thing most people seem to imagine. They appear to go on the supposition that **The Vocal Gift.** the way fine singers get voices is to be "born" with them. Using this phrase in the colloquial sense in which they use it, I can assure them that about the surest way *not* to get a great voice is to be born with it. There is only one sure way, and that is to go about the business of developing whatever gift one may happen to have in a methodical and business-like way, not worrying much about its inherent merit. Tall oaks from little acorns grow, and the voice you will have resembles the voice you were "born" with about as much as the mature oak resembles the parent acorn.

Potentially wonderful musical instruments are placed in all human throats, all exactly alike in construction although subject to infinite variation in the matter of individual characteristics. Some excel in this, some in that quality or detail; some appear to be superior in all respects. But there are a thousand other things to be considered, such as brains, health, musical talent, personality and the like, and these seem to be balanced in heaven or somewhere, making a tolerably even apportionment so far as the original gift is concerned.

Before leaving this phase of our subject it may be well to correct a very common error regarding the physical character of the voice.

**Physical Characteristics of the Voice.** Although extremely sensitive to misuse, it is really one of the *toughest* parts of the human organism. It is never immature, it is never old. It arrives on these shores in full panoply of vigorous activity which it never loses to the end of life. Changes take place constantly but,

they are effected without loss of power, with the possible exception of the grand change, and even that, I suspect, is more an impression produced by incorrect use than an actual, normal condition of the organ itself. The *effect* of delicacy, of immaturity, of age comes invariably from wrong use, and is never inherent in the voice itself. Like all high-powered, complex mechanism, it is not to be meddled with by unskilled fingers. It is vastly more intricate than any instrument or machine made by man, yet works so smoothly under favorable conditions that it seems extremely simple. Almost more wonderful than the original instrument are the safeguards thrown about it for the purpose of minimizing the effects of improper use. So successfully has Nature accomplished this part of her task that most persons are not aware that there is any such thing as correctness or incorrectness of vocal action. They seem to think that if you have a voice there is nothing to do but to "go ahead" and sing with it. Verily, we are still in the dark ages of vocalism! There are probably a thousand good and sufficient reasons why my reader will never be a fine singer, but lack of original vocal gift will scarcely be one of them.

A tremendously important factor in great singing is the diaphragm. Resonance spaces may or may not be filled; vocal cords behave well or ill, but the diaphragm "goes on forever". **The Diaphragm.** When it fails, everything fails. Pretty little light, chirpy, "parlor" voices, with a carrying radius of about twelve feet are self-evidently diaphragm-less. Harsh, strident, loud voices; thin, tinny, piercing voices; stiff monotonous, inexpressive voices, which stumble lumberingly over "runs"; husky, throaty, caterwauling voices; in short, all unpleasantness of vocal tone may be traced back "at the last" to a fault in the action of the diaphragm.

Place the finger tips below the breast bone, just where the most yielding surface is found. Exhale suddenly, whispering "pooh", at the same time pressing gently with the fingers. If successful you will realize that the relaxation of some muscle has left you breathless. What has really happened is that the diaphragm has relaxed (upward) pushing before it the breath which has found egress through the lips. The breath may also be expelled (wrongly) by contracting the muscles of the solar-plexus region, by contracting the abdominal walls, by letting the chest fall, or by contracting the inter-costal (rib) muscles. Clear distinction in this matter is one of the most important as well as elusive things in voice production. Contraction forces the breath too violently against the cords and the whole vocal apparatus contracts to meet

the shock. The harder the breath comes, the tighter the throat contracts; a dead-lock ensues; the singer is in agony, and the whole result is agonizing. This agony may not appear at once; it would be much better for the singer if it did, for it is a danger signal of great importance. We begin to realize what a wonderful machine the voice is when we

**Voice; Effects of Misuse.** take in the fact that this or any other wrong process, may go on for years without any appreciably bad effect.

It takes about ten years, ordinarily, for the singer to run through his natural gift. Like the frog, he has been thoroughly and finally "boiled" without even suspecting it. Sometimes it will last a little longer, which is even more pathetic, as there is less probability of the error being retrieved. And here we meet with a still more surprising fact about the voice, namely, that, unlike poor froggy, it is capable of being "unboiled". The complications are intricate, but they are all capable of solution by a rigorous application of the method I am describing.

Having expelled the breath successfully—whatever may have happened to be in the lungs at the moment—we may now attempt the converse. As the breath is drawn in, the solar-plexus region will expand, the fingers being forced suddenly outward. When the lungs are filled the diaphragm will have reached its lowest point (by contraction). Hold it in this position a few seconds; then exhale as before, but this time upon the palm of the hand, through a tiny orifice in the extended lips. Great care must be taken not to check or economize in

**Inhalation.** the outflow. In this way is recorded upon the hand both the storage capacity of the lungs and the force of the diaphragm. If it comes too violently you have undoubtedly contracted instead of relaxing.—If you have relaxed well the breath will come generously and elastically, and with perfect steadiness.—For some weeks a slight hissing sound may be indulged at the lips—not in the throat—during the inhalation. In some mysterious manner it insures freedom of diaphragmatic action, and also serves to keep the teacher posted as to what is going on. It also gives the pupil a clear consciousness of the diaphragm, an exceedingly important matter. When taking breath be sure to take plenty, as we may only use that which is under pressure. Past a certain point the breath will cease to flow of its own accord, even though considerable air may still remain in the lungs. This quantity cannot be expelled except by muscular contraction, which is, of course, forbidden, so it remains in the lungs a permanent balance, or reserve.

The sudden relaxation of the diaphragm is the most important single matter in tone production. It brings to bear upon the vocal cords exactly what they must have: a full supply of breath right from the start. When not supported by a sufficient supply of breath the voice is like a ship in shallow water; nothing can prevent a wreck. Unless this supply comes promptly too, other muscles will anticipate with convulsive, spasmodic action, and vocal balance will be completely lost. Again, it takes more force to set the cords in motion than to keep them going after they are well started, so it can readily be seen that this initial impulse of the diaphragm is a vital matter. The whole system is based upon it, and the reader is warned that it must be exactly right or all the rest

**Diaphragmatic Impulse.** will be useless, no matter how skilfully executed. It may be helpful to compare it to the more obvious

action of the violin bow. Everyone must have noticed that the violinist brings his bow down upon the string with just such a sudden stroke as I have described, and for the same reason. If he laid it upon the string slowly and hesitatingly, he would run the risk of no tone at all or at best, a scratchy one. This looks about as simple as anything can be, and the vocal proposition is simple too, were it not for the superperfection of the instrument, which here, as elsewhere presents peculiar problems to the would-be vocalist. Comparisons with other instruments are for this reason unsatisfactory, but imagine, if you can, for a moment, that the violin were not a dead, stationary thing, but alive, like the voice. What would happen if, when improperly handled, it were capable, of its own accord, of squeezing out some kind of tone, good enough to satisfy the ear of the violinist in his preoccupation with notes, rhythm, phrasing, etc.? Do you not see that it would add greatly to the difficulty of acquiring a fine tone? The violinist who plays a scratchy tone without knowing it, is, however, in a more favorable situation than the singer who fails to get the diaphragmatic impulse delivered right. When he had "scratched" enough to spoil his instrument, if such a thing were possible, he could buy a new one; an alternative not open to the singer.

We will assume that the impulse has been successfully accomplished, and that the breath is on its way. Only one danger now

**Breath: Causes of Checking.** menaces, but it presses from many directions: the danger of checking it. Wrong pronunciation of a vowel will check it; trying to sing too loud, or what is the same thing, worrying for fear the diaphragm will not press hard enough, will check it; the natural desire to economize in

the outflow, lest it give out before the end of the phrase, will check it. So persistent, so fatal is this danger, that I follow a well-defined policy with regard to it, making the breath the first consideration, wherever possible.

**Art of Phrasing Deferred.** All idea of phrasing is postponed for some months.

The pupil is allowed to stop anywhere, at any time, to take a fresh supply rather than incur the danger of checking, or the equally bad one of spinning the breath out too long, by forcibly expelling it. Pride in the ability to sing long phrases is usually of a very false kind. Extraordinary power in this direction is, of course, very valuable, when it

**Effect of Prolonged Exhalation.** is legitimate, but often it is due to the fact that a thin, tight tone

is being sung, which requires very little breath, or that the resonating spaces are not being filled. Or it may be that the phrase has been so long that the point of exhaustion is dangerously near, when the tendency to take the next breath in a spasmodic fashion will be too strong to be resisted. Phrasing, in the literal sense, is a very simple matter, and may be deferred until the breathing technique is well established. But while we are complacent about *where* breath is taken, the "how" of it must be *perfect*. But there are less tangible things which may check the diaphragm. A thought may do it, such as wondering what the next note is, or if the "time" is right; anything at all, in fact, or nothing at all. It is always ready to stop. It is better to sing a wrong note at the wrong time than to run the risk of checking the diaphragm. The note will be there tomorrow, and the time can be learned later, but if the breath goes wrong, something has happened which tomorrow cannot rectify. A habit is under way, which will grow apace, and finally vitiate the entire work.

Unless checked very soon after starting, the breath will show a tendency to proceed automatically, or more graphically, to "go ahead under its own steam". The singer's part

**Breath: Automatic Flow.** then is to revel in this pleasurable sensation.

A delicious languor steals over the senses, a sure sign that IT has come. Under the spell of IT both singer and hearer feel the inspiration, the glow of perfect singing—the most perfect thing, some of us think, in this excellent world. Almost at the start pupils will sometimes hit upon this with quite astonishing results. The degree to which relax-

**Facial Expression.** ation is promoted by correct singing is plainly shown in the face of the singer. After some particularly happy meeting of thought and action the singer's face sometimes appears to such unique advantage as to make one wonder

which were more pleased, the ear or the eye. The relaxation of habitually contracted facial muscles, together with the spiritual and physical joy of good tone production, writes upon the face something seen there at no other time. So definite is this, that it may be put down as axiomatic, that any movement of facial muscles, contraction of brows, winking, etc., is conclusive evidence of bad singing.

As soon as the breath is under its own "steam" it sets up a sort of give and take understanding with the vocal cords, and with the **Co-ordination of Vocal Elements.** resonance spaces of mouth, nose and head, and the whole apparatus will "chug" merrily along, the singer being as little concerned about it all as the man in the moon. It is at such moments that the full possibilities of the voice are realized. The imagination is unfettered by any earthly tie, and the soul soars to the stars. It is a far swoop down to earth and the taking of the next breath, but it must somehow be negotiated. We do not dare trust that "starry" sensation for long. The next breath must be taken as coldly, as calculatingly as if no celestial adventure had intervened.

A good idea of the vocal process on the diaphragmatic side may be gained from the ordinary toy balloon of commerce—the **Vocal Process Illustrated.** kind that toots. Inflate and hold it, stem up, with the finger blocking the air. Remove the finger and you have a perfect picture of the vocal process. The blowing up of the rubber corresponds to inhalation; the freeing of the compressed air and the resultant tone are identical with their vocal counterparts, although from the tonal side, it must be admitted, the experiment leaves considerable to be desired! Note that the force expended in the production of the tone is supplied by the elasticity of the rubber (diaphragm), the same having been stored at the moment of inflation (inhalation).

A still better illustration is furnished by the bow and arrow of tradition. The arrow (breath) is held firmly between the thumb and finger (storing or "holding" muscles of the diaphragm), the bow is bent by a strong pull on the string (inhalation), thus storing force (compressed air). Exactly as the elasticity of the bow sends the arrow flying to its mark, so the pent up force of the diaphragm, by means of compression exerted upon the breath, sends it against the vocal cords, where it becomes sound, on up into the resonance spaces of mouth, nose and head, where it is increased in volume and beauty; out through the mouth and nose, where it becomes tone; on out to

the audience where it becomes music, or at least the material of music. The particular point to notice is that as the arrow is sped on its way by the relaxation of the bow, so the tone depends purely upon the principle of relaxation for its production.

If, in addition to this natural, involuntary force of the diaphragm, the voluntary muscles of the solar-plexus region are aggressively contracted, more force will be brought to bear upon the cords, and the resultant tone will be more brilliant. If closely analyzed by critical ears, however, it will be found that a tone so forced will be what we call over-brilliant. That is, the overtones will be unduly emphasized, resulting in a perceptible admixture of harshness to the quality. Either that or the fundamental portion will be over-emphasized, giving a dull, forced, "loud" tone. The pressure upon the larynx will strain it appreciably, and consequent stiffness and sluggishness in action will be unavoidable. The ultimate effect of such a practice will be, of course, the utter ruin of the organ.

A complication which really belongs later in our scheme may be treated at this point, thus avoiding a recurrence to the subject. Under

**Diaphragmatic Impulse:** some circumstances, as with very new or  
**When Impracticable.** very old pupils, i. e. those who have not

sung at all, or those who have sung a great deal by an incorrect method, a really satisfactory impulse of the diaphragm is impracticable. With the beginner, the muscles are too weak, and with the old singer, convulsive, sympathetic action of extraneous throat muscles cannot be inhibited all at once. Treatment is the same in both cases. Continue to sing in the lighter way until conditions have changed favorably. Excellent musical results must not be expected in the meantime, however, for it takes a good strong push of the diaphragm to awaken the co-resonance of the head spaces, without which true vocal effect will be wanting in any voice, no matter how excellent its natural make-up. Time will take care of this, as of many puzzling matters, if teacher and pupil will apply themselves patiently and steadily, without being too eager for immediate results.

Indirectly, too, the initial impulse of the diaphragm works to our advantage by fixing the attention where it belongs, preventing a

**Indirect Effects of** too intense mental concentration upon other  
**Diaphragmatic Impulse.** parts of the apparatus. The voice must be "played" from the solar-plexus. The mind should stay right there and never stray except partially, and

more or less subconsciously, to take in such comparative trifles as the notes, words and various calculations, with regard to pitch, rhythm, vowel formation, consonant enunciation, etc. The mouth, like the bell of a cornet, is an important part of the apparatus, and indeed the place where sound comes out, but to try to sing there is utterly absurd. The practiced ear can instantly detect the difference when a singer's mind leaves its proper habitat, and goes roaming off up around the mouth. Beauty of tone disappears as if by magic, and control becomes progressively sticky.

With a view to keeping well within the practical, and for the sake of simplicity of expression, I have spoken of the breathing process

**Breathing: Technical Description.** in general as diaphragmatic. For the sake of any who might appreciate greater technical exactness, I may say that this is really a combined breathing, in which the entire torso is involved. The fixed high chest insures the largest possible storage capacity in the upper lungs, the sympathetic action of the rib-muscles (intercostals), constantly expanding and contracting, at the side of the lungs, the downward plunge and upward relaxation of the diaphragm at the floor of the lungs, the sympathetic action of the abdominal muscles, powerfully supporting and seconding the activities of the diaphragm; all these together undeniably furnish the largest possible breath supply and the greatest flexibility of control.

I have dwelt thus at length on the mechanical side of breathing, because of the great value of knowing "why" we do certain things.

**Relation of the System to Breath Control.** In actual practice, however, all the finer points of this truly astonishing process are taken care of by the various items of the method, described at length in succeeding chapters. The pupil must take the breath and deliver the initial impulse, but after that all direct control practically ceases, with the single exception noted in a later chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### “INITIAL” VOWELS



LTHOUGH vowels have no special voice-cultural value, they are given precedence, in deference to custom. In the minds of most people, vocal quality is inseparably bound up with the idea of a vowel. The facts are plainly contrary to this view as will appear frequently in these pages.

We will classify as “Initials” those which begin a phrase; that is, the first sound after each fresh breath. When the first sound of a phrase is represented by a consonant there is, of course, no possibility of an initial vowel in that phrase. Final vowels, similarly, can only, occur at the close of a phrase. All others are “Intermediates”. Vowels

**Vowel Classification.** are also spoken of as “dark” and “light”. The vowels which are produced with the mouth corners extended are called “dark”; all others, “light”. Vowels constitute the most difficult single feature of tone production. In the directions which follow there is no expectation of a polished musical result. It will answer the immediate purpose if they are attacked without throat contraction, and sustained with unvarying breath pressure. Their cultivation is taken care of entirely by the consonants.

**E** Beginning with the “smallest” vowel, E (she), simply leave the mouth open very slightly, with the lips neutral, or drawn back enough to keep them well away from the teeth. No particular shaping is necessary. Pupils nearly always shape too much and in general “try too hard” with this vowel. In many instances the “trouble” is all caused by the ambition to produce something “beautiful” or “grand”. The bent in this direction is strong in most pupils having a definite talent for singing. They simply cannot believe that the most beautiful, the most “sympathetic”, and yea, verily, even the “grandest” tones are not produced by direct intention, but simply *fall out* as the inevitable result of certain definite conditions. These conditions it is the business of the System to insure.

Merely telling the pupil this, has little effect, as I have found out by sad experience. The business is one of nice mechanical measurements and adjustments requiring calm and analytical consideration. The first thing to do, therefore, is to overcome the strained mental attitude induced by the desire to sing well (incipient singing mania). “Talk” about it has no effect except to wind the eager nerves of the

pupil tighter than ever, but while success by frontal attack is unlikely, flanking movements are entirely practicable. Psychology furnishes the key to this situation as to many others in voice culture. I undermine the pupil's grandeur of intention by the use of the homeliest expressions possible. For instance, I used to illustrate tone production by calling attention to the vocal process of the king of beasts. The illustration in itself is perfect. I had it from my teacher, and he got it from his, the famous Julius Hey, surely a respectable derivation. But, for all that, I found that it only made the pupils want to "roar" more grandly than ever. So the lion is banished from my vocal menagerie, and now I get more satisfactory results from the "foster mother of the human race", the family cow. It is simply impossible for any one to keep on being grand and gloomy when put in the same boat with a cow, so the difficulty yields at once.

I found this out in teaching this very vowel EE. In sheer desperation one day I conjured a pupil to "just leave a crack in your face and blow through it". The response was immediate, a beautiful and absolutely correct vowel. The application of the psychological principle is simple enough, so I will spare the reader the infliction of further specimens in the concrete.

The very idea of singing is so inspiring that if appealed to in beautiful language the pupil simply cannot resist the temptation to make an effort along that clearly indicated line. He will do well to leave the artistic and beautiful out of his calculations in thinking of vocal technique. Instrumentalists must think of these things on account of the imperfection of their instruments. The problem of the singer is rather to resist the intoxicating beauty of the voice, lest he be carried away by it, and indulge in excesses of feeling, untempered by mental control.

**OO** For OO the rule is the same as for EE except that the mouth corners are extended as far forward as possible. In all vowels calling for extended mouth corners it is well to let the lips flare outward, like the bell of a cornet. OO, as in Good involves no different principle.

**A** For A (fate) same as for EE, but with jaw wider. Lips neutral.

**O** For O (boat) same, except that the mouth corners are extended.

**A** For A (man) open jaws still wider; almost as far as they will go. Lips neutral.

**AW** For AW (dawn) same width of jaws, with mouth corners very far forward.

**A** For A (part), jaws wide open, lips neutral.

It seems rather absurd thus minutely to describe the self-evident. Any two year old child can give a perfect demonstration of them all, but adults often lose instincts and must replace them with conscious and reasoned action. As a matter of fact all these vowel shapings will bear close watching. A mirror is a good and inexpensive teacher.

**Diphthongs.** Diphthongs are treated as double vowels, and present no difficulty except a natural tendency to slight the unaccented vowel sound. These will be treated later.

**W** W is in effect a vowel, and is treated the same as OO.

**U** By far the most difficult of the vowels are the three short ones, U (bud), E (men), I (it). These shortened vowels I call "rogues" on

**U-E-I** account of their resemblance in general characteristics to the rogue (vicious) elephant. The

**"Rogue" Vowels.** shortening process seems to have taken away whatever of tractability they may have originally possessed, at the same time increasing their capacity for destructiveness. They are absolutely unmusical in quality and cannot be produced in pure form without violating every canon of good taste. Singers will deny this, for singers are not, as a class, given to discriminating in these matters. That is why there are so few good singers. They imagine that they are producing these vowels but in reality they are doing nothing of the sort. They do them exactly as I am about to describe, but instinctively. But the trouble with doing things instinctively is that just when the crucial moment arrives, when everything depends on instinct,

**Fallibility of Instinct.** instinct will not be on duty. The natural singer, the natural humorist, when he realizes that a big test is

on, suddenly becomes the most artificial person imaginable, unless his instinctive genius is in some way reinforced by mental action.

Not the slightest difficulty will be experienced in a musical rendering of the rogue vowels once the attention is called to their proper treatment. Simply sing them with a slightly wider jaw than would be called for by their pure formation, and the unpleasant quality will vanish, and enough of the vowel color remain to render them clearly recognizable. Do your best to "kill" the vowel altogether. Thus U (bud) will be almost but not quite A (hark); E (men) will become almost A (had); I (it) is transformed into a sound faintly resembling A in "man". Considering how thickly a song is strewn with these vocal "mines" (they average about fifteen to a page in English) any one of which will instantly wreck the placement, it is not strange that so

many promising careers are blighted. Voices are absolutely dependent upon placement for a continuance of musical quality.

Add to this the fact that the "rogues" often appear under false colors, and any one can see the importance of this almost wholly neglected branch of vowel production.  
**Rogues Disguised.** For instance, the U (bud) appears often enough in its simple form to make fatal trouble, but when it also masquerades as O (come), as E (nerve), as I (circle), and in wholly invisible form as in the interpolated U in "peop(u)le", "is(u)n't", etc., to say nothing of its appearance diphthongally, in diphthongs themselves disguised as lone and innocent vowels, as O in "Once" (OO-UH), or in close company with a consonant which is really a vowel, as W in "wonder" (OO-UH), the trouble seems endless, hopeless. It is hopeless unless discovered in time and rendered harmless by the modification I have suggested, when they at once become the most harmless of all vowels. It is a good plan to look through a song before attempting to sing it, marking all the "rogues". It will not do to stop at anything less than perfection in this or in anything vocal.

**Technical Perfection Necessary.** Occasional lapses are fatal to the formation of correct habits. To show this, I use a homely illustration. A young boy was accustomed to appear at table minus those detergent preparations customary in well-ordered families. His father was wont to correct this oversight by issuing appropriate orders. After a long routine of this sort of thing the boy's mother remonstrated. "Willy, why do you come to the table with dirty hands when you know very well that your father always makes you go away and wash them?" Willy, who is probably a great lawyer by this time, replied with conviction, "No, Ma! Once he didn't!"

The second rogue, E (men), is less tricky, but may easily deceive as AI (said), EI (their) and A in "many".

I has but one disguise, but it is an effective one, Y in "kindly", etc. This is a formidable list of complications, but like all other difficulties, melts away when the right solvent is applied. In vocal work it is peculiarly true that "forewarned is forearmed". The musical improvement effected by the modifications suggested is so marked that even the singer will notice it. The point would not need special emphasis were it not for the fact that it is, so far as I know, almost wholly neglected by vocal teachers. It may also be noted that speech and song are at variance in this particular. On account of the rapidity of the spoken word, these ugly vowel sounds are usually given in

their unmodified form, thus making a deep mental impression which will need to be counteracted by many a word of caution oft repeated.

Before leaving the subject of vowel formation, it may be noted that in the upper octave (from C sharp upward), the jaws will need to be opened wider on all vowels. Some talented pupils are very backward about this, due, doubtless, to an instinctive and well-grounded fear of losing the placement. When the jaws are almost wide open, the grabbings which mar the production of high tones are at their worst. When at their widest these seem to be less in evidence. A consequence of the wider jaw angle, vowel clarity lessens, and finally all but disappears, a loss more than balanced by the wonderful richness imparted to the tone by the greater proportion of head resonance. In this richness of upper range the voice is incomparably superior to all instruments. This widening process also seems complex and indefinite. It really is, and would be quite hopelessly difficult, were it not that here as everywhere in tone production, Nature is trying her best to help us. It is only necessary to understand clearly our own part in the process; Nature will meet us considerably more than half way. Even this matter of vowel modifications on high pitches is, in the last analysis, instinctive. Once the attention is called to them they will be accomplished with ease and certainty. The great

**Effect of Forcing** danger is in forcing. The effect of head tones is so tremendous, as we hear them, that we forget **Upper Register.** that this tonal lustre is largely due to the magnifying power of the head spaces, and so are betrayed into making an effort which is not only unnecessary, but which will in time utterly destroy the upper register.

This easing of the voice and attendant elimination of distinctive vowel color is also applicable to the singing of extremely low pitches, although a widening of the jaw angle is not necessary. **Vowel-Shaping on Low Pitches.** That this is also instinctive is demonstrated by every village basso. Note how he throws out more and more vowel ballast as he goes down, down—"rocked in the cradle of the deep". Well he knows that either the vowel or the voice must disappear on that final EE.

Having formed the mouth properly, the next step is to keep the whole apparatus immovable. That sounds easy, but the eye of the **Production of Initial Vowels.** expert will note slight movements of the jaw quite imperceptible to the casual observer. One hundred per cent of immobility we must have or the whole

system falls to the ground. The slightest movement of the jaw, head or body, or even pulling the eyes about, winking, wrinkling the forehead, etc., may invalidate the entire scheme. At best, they are a waste of force required elsewhere. At the worst they become mentally incorporated in the process of tone production itself, and are subconsciously treated as legitimate elements of the art.

The next step is to "think" the pitch. This is another of those marvels of instinct, working admirably until an emergency arises, when it

**Pitch Thinking.** promptly becomes inoperative. So long as the mind holds the pitch thought, the vocal cords have no alternative but to obey. But suppose that just at the instant of singing the attention strays. In a flash they relax, and the singer is horrified to hear a false pitch, perhaps far below the one he intended to sing. It is but the work of a moment to correct it, and no permanent harm would be done were it not for the strong tendency of all abnormal action to become habitual. This particular act becomes a habit with extreme

**Loss of Head Tones Through Faulty Pitch-Thinking.**

when the skill of the singer is barely sufficient to handle the tone, perhaps a high one on a difficult vowel. The added burden of suddenly raising the pitch upsets his balance, and he has recourse to the extrinsic muscles of the tongue and throat, having nothing to do with tone production except to clog the action of the intrinsic muscles. Somehow, in spite of the added drag, the cords finally sound the pitch. The singer accepts the final result as a success, giving all the credit, naturally, to the spasmodic action of the extrinsic muscles. The next time he will invoke their aid at once. In the end he will be unable to get the tone on any terms, forced or otherwise. One by one the head tones will disappear, until they are all silent, and the singer is a singer no more.

The next step is easy or hard, according to the mental habits of the pupil. He must "deny" the vowel with all his might. If there "Killing" is a real, personal devil, I am sure he gloats over the things vowels do to singers. Never, under any circumstances, may a singer *directly* sing or pronounce a vowel, or any part of a vowel sound. The almost irresistible impulse is to pronounce the vowels ourselves, that is, with the muscles of the throat or back of the tongue. It will be of no use to call attention to these muscles, for the singer uses them unconsciously, and is so accustomed to the offensive quality, that he has come to accept it as an inherent characteristic of his voice, for better or for worse. The chances are

that whatever unpleasantness of tone characterizes a voice is due to this habit of *saying* the vowel, instead of, or in addition to, shaping the mouth, and passively exhaling through the vocal cords.

The eradication of this fault is a delicate and sometimes a long-drawn-out process. So long as the attention is centered on the vowel it is bound to be uncertain as well. It was this uncertainty that drove me, in sheer desperation, to analysis of the consonants as a possible means of meeting the difficulty. Ever since lisping the early "da-da" or "ma-ma", the singer has been making vowels. When he goes to a vocal teacher he expects to learn more about how to make them,

**"Feline" Quality—** so a hard battle may be looked for at this point. It is this overdoing of the vowel which renders the cat's voice so unpleasant.

a Lesson from the Cat. So marked is this in the "M-a-e-o-u-w" of the cat that it may well be designated as the "feline" quality. If the reader will go into the subject at all deeply he will learn to detect this quality in a voice instantly. It is not necessary that the offensive color be present in large quantity. A little spearmint will be enough to spoil your tea, even if you should chance to adore it in chewing gum. I recall a Sunday evening many years ago in the mountains. I was frantically engaged in trying to escape from a powerful soprano voice. After reaching the most distant piazza I was at bay, and still suffering, for the feline quality carries well. At that moment I was stung to remark that it would be a good thing if singers could be strangled in their cradles. And yet, as the echo of that maddening voice comes to me across the years, I realize that it had many excellent qualities, and only just a little of the hateful feline vowel, but that little was enough.

By this time, let us hope, the singer is resigned to the fact that he is never to sing or say or enunciate or articulate or do anything else to a vowel, but simply to shape and exhale, leaving placement, poise, resonance, quality, register, etc., etc., to Nature. I will even go so far as to say that if O or A sounds to the singer like O or A it is wrong.

In addition to other temptations to overdo the vowel is the necessity for clarity of diction which presses upon the singer from every side.

**Harmfulness of "Vowel Diction".** The manager, the music "committee", the plain listener, all feel aggrieved if they do not hear the words. The singer, anxious to please, clutches desperately at the first means within reach which is, of course, the vowel. Managers and committees would do far better to leave the "wordless" singer alone, for clarity of diction gained by over-emphasis of the vowel

will result in total loss of musical quality. The pathos of this situation lies in the fact that the voice may be utterly ruined as a voice without any of those concerned suspecting the reason.

**Ruined Voices.** The singer himself is absolutely helpless in the matter. The only warning he receives is the unpleasant fact that his voice is not "liked". Let the singer who finds himself in this plight look into the matter, and see if there is not just a little of that feline quality in his tone. I know this is asking the almost impossible, for every singer dotes on his method, even more than on his voice, and it goes against the grain to admit a fault. Singers often remind me of an organist I knew out in St. Louis. His church was in the path of the cyclone which destroyed parts of that city in the early nineties. Everyone was anxious to know what damage had been sustained by the organ, so my friend went in and played soulfully on it for awhile (probably something of his "own") and confidently announced that it was all right. Later they took a wagon load of bricks and miscellaneous junk out of it, including a full sized bed and mattress. The bill for repairs was over twelve hundred dollars. How much better for a singer to admit the possibility of a fault than to worry along with an inferior instrument, doomed to a constantly accelerating rate of deterioration. Better, certainly, and less painful than to see every other singer's voice preferred to his own. For all such there is a great hope in the method I am describing.

Having shaped the mouth, thought the pitch, guarded against superfluous motions, and denied the vowel, it only remains to turn on the breath with the diaphragmatic impulse described in Chapter III. In doing this it will be well to give special attention to the avoidance of the glottic stroke, so harmful to the organ, substituting therefor the Breathed Attack. Preface the vowel with a very discreet H. Its discreetness consists in its not being heard by the audience. Care should be taken to avoid contracting the throat. The breathed attack must be thoroughly mastered as we use it with all initial vowels, and wherever possible with consonants. The beautifying and enriching of the vowel will be treated later.

**H.** The execution of the aspirate, H, is identical with the foregoing except that it is distinctly audible. Great care will have to be taken lest the aspirate be exaggerated, producing a guttural effect, and ruining the succeeding vowel. H is a sort of alien in the tone family, being neither a vowel nor a consonant. It is the *enfant terrible* of voice culture, yet it is subject, in a way, to the general laws of tone production. It comes straight from the diaphragm, and it must not catch in the

throat. The sound should be made by the forcible splashing of the breath against the roof of the mouth; the farther forward the better. It must not be prolonged, and during its production, the pitch thought must be held desperately, and great care must be taken to keep breath-pressure even.

## CHAPTER V

### INITIAL CONSONANTS



VOWELS naturally come first in order of discussion, but my chief reliance for placement, poise, equalization of registers, precision of attack, vowel coloring, volume, diction, shading, control and quality, as well as for resonance of nose, mouth, head and chest, and in attaining the exact proportion of each in the general blend, and for imparting a feeling of security on extreme pitches, is upon the consonants. These are ordinarily looked upon as the prolific trouble-makers, the necessary nuisances of tone production. One authority defines them thus: "The vowels are the musical sounds, the consonants are the *noises*." That their clear, and even emphatic, delivery is an absolute necessity is freely admitted by all, but as they are considered blots on the vocal escutcheon it is no more than natural that they should be slighted wherever possible, and more or less bunglingly executed when not wholly forgotten.

It may be said of consonants in general that they have no such carrying power as the vowels, and so need to be delivered with considerable force; more, probably, in the learning stage than good taste would sanction, especially in a small room. Even in a small room, however, and executed without polish, the effect is not so crude as the singer imagines. If words are to be sung at all they should be sung convincingly. The trend of modern culture is all in the direction of making more of the words. In the old Italian School, for instance, the words had little to do with the general effect. The composer conceived the voice as a musical instrument, pure and simple, and his position was entirely logical.

The modern evolutionary impulse, however, has been diametrically opposed to that conception of the voice. So violent was the reaction from the smoothly flowing vocalism of the **The Dramatic Style.** Italians that a vast deal of shouting and mouth-ing of phrases was indulged, in the name of the dramatic: particularly in the early days of the Wagnerian cult. Wagner came to be looked upon by real singers as the arch-enemy of the vocal style. This always seemed to me one of the most painful injustices in the history of the art, for whatever one may think of Wagner otherwise, it must be granted that he is one of the few composers who really knew the voice, and thoroughly exploited its possibilities. The fact remains that the era ushered in by

Wagner witnessed a most distressing slump from the thrilling beauty of the Italian Bel Canto. Nevertheless, the great master was right and his use of the voice was not only legitimate, but prophetic. The demand for a singing style and technique which, in addition to pure vocal beauty, shall include a poetic and dramatic recital of the words, still persists, and modern vocalism is called upon to meet it.

There can be no questioning the fact that the old Italian masters looked upon the words as secondary. The old "Divas" were little more than human singing birds, celestially beautiful, it is true, but they belonged, in a sense, to the evolutionary status of the race which preceded speech. Those of us who had the good fortune to hear the great exemplars of that school, Patti, Nilsson, Del Puente, Galassi and other grand old war horses of the Italian opera, must confess, if pinned down to it, that we neither cared nor noticed whether words were being sung or not.

The same evolutionary urge which made the race dissatisfied with mere sounds, as a medium of vocal expression, and demanded words, is forcing us to look upon the singing art as, first of all, concerned with the expression of ideas through words, enhanced by all possible vocal beauty, and a wealth of musical meaning in the instrumental accompaniment. In achieving this glorified declamation we must have vowel coloring equally as gorgeous as the Italian, but far beyond anything they have shown us in the line of consonant delivery. It is upon these that we must largely depend for imparting force, dignity and meaning to the musical phrase. Close observation of the practical out-working of this method would also seem to justify the hope of added brilliancy and greater variety in the matter of vowel-coloring.

We are, therefore, quite in the trend of evolutionary development in basing our system of voice culture upon the consonants. As a matter of fact, however, I was not consciously guided by any such thought in my final adoption of consonants as a vocal basis, although subconsciously this evolutionary impulse was doubtless a moving cause. My only object was to find a smooth, perfect and beautiful tone by more direct and scientifically exact methods than have been in use up to the present time, avoiding all forcing of the apparatus.

We will now proceed to their practical treatment, although we are by no means through with the vowels, with which they are, in fact, inextricably intertwined. Discarding the conventional nomenclature as cumbersome, and from a vocal point of view, meaningless, we will divide them into four classes, giving them plain, but descriptive, names.

#### **Classification of Consonants.**

## *Initial Consonants*

1. Vocals, L M N R V Z TH (this) NG and Z (azure).
2. Vocal-explosives, B D G and J.
3. Voiceless Explosives, K P T and CH.
4. Sibilants or Hissers, F S SH and TH (thing).

All the vocals may be vocalized on any pitch in the range. When so vocalized they insure the purity and highest degree of power, volume and beauty of the succeeding vowel. They preclude the **Vocals.** possibility of any error in poise, register or intonation, allowing all pitches to be sung with equal ease and security, and with all dynamic shadings. Still more interesting is the fact that when the voice yields completely to the consonant each vowel is definitely, although delicately, tinted by it, each consonant bestowing its own peculiar and characteristic lustre or vocal virtue. Use of consonants in the way I am about to describe therefore guarantees not only richness of resonance, but a bewildering wealth and variety of tonal coloring, with every imaginable nuance of shading. It precludes the possibility of that fearsome monotony of coloring which invariably characterizes the voice trained by means of vowels alone.

**L** For L (1), place tip of tongue (very pointed) at base of upper front teeth, leaving the mouth open as wide as possible, and allowing all possible space at each side of the tongue, thus insuring free egress to the tone. For extreme high tones the tip may be placed further back; astonishing freedom, security and brilliancy are secured by this simple expedient. (2) "Turn on" the breath, and when the tone comes, hold it long enough to verify the pitch, test for freedom of diaphragmatic action and allow for calculations with regard to the production of the succeeding vowel or consonant. At first this will take quite an appreciable amount of time, and will preclude the possibility of giving much attention to rhythm, phrasing or style. These are almost self-evidently simple in the art of singing, once the voice is exactly right. Overcome the tendency to produce the L gutturally (contracting the muscles of the throat or tongue), by impressing upon the pupil that it is only necessary to bisect the air column to produce it. To prove this a lead pencil may be used instead of the tongue, which gives a fairly good execution of the consonant. The L gives a light, liquid resonance to the succeeding vowel, and is very reliable, especially on high pitches. When coming after a vowel it is particularly grateful and safe, as the tone simply cannot go "back". It also lures to a soft and polished vanish. With a finely trained diaphragm back of it the nuance takes on a wonderfully ethereal quality. Suppose the word "linger" is to be sung on a very high pitch. Place tongue

against upper teeth, mouth wide open; think pitch clearly and turn on breath from diaphragm. Probably you will say that you cannot sing in such a ridiculous position. What you should say is that you cannot sing *incorrectly* in such a position. As the tone starts you will feel an overpowering desire to contract the throat muscles. If this is avoided the consonant will come correctly. Many will prevent correct action by bending the head forward, closing the jaw, winking, or wrinkling the forehead. Some will take away the tongue tip as the breath is turned on, then, as the tone comes, quickly shoot it back into place, or will let the pitch thought go, relaxing the vocal cords. The degree of difficulty in inhibiting these phenomena will be the exact measure of your shortcoming in the production of high tones. If the demonstration is too difficult a lower pitch may be taken until facility has been acquired. In general it may be said that the extreme pitches of the range should be used but seldom, and not at all until the pupil is well advanced.

M M is the king of resonators in respect to richness of resonance. It is so easy to produce that pupils often spend a great deal of time finding out how to make it, only to discover later that it makes itself. Simply have mouth and lips closed (do not close lips at moment of vocalizing), the pitch clearly thought, the breath turned on and nothing, absolutely nothing, more. But they always do "more", more, in this case, being a tightening of the throat muscles, generally due to a desire to place the tone in the nose. As soon as that insane impulse is conquered there is no way in which it can possibly go wrong. One caution may be given, however. This consonant requires more breath than any of the others, except R, and is frequently "starved" for breath. It may be safely vocalized on all pitches. In the upper range it is not nearly so rich, and care must be taken to avoid forcing. Care must be taken not to force the succeeding vowel either, and no change beyond the dropping of the jaw must be allowed. All the resonance, all the "tone" is present in the consonant. The opening of the jaw for the vowel is merely the opening of a door to a room in which a choir is singing. It makes the music seem louder, that is all, so far as the singer need know. Some make an extra effort just as the "door" opens, as if the "choir" were desired to sing louder, completely overdoing and spoiling the effect. Some check the breath at the moment of opening, as if the choir had been signaled to sing softer as the door was about to be opened. If the mouth is opened too suddenly it will have a tendency to disarrange the proportion of resonance, emphasizing the vowel, or mouth resonance, at the expense of head

resonance. All these faults are superfluous; mere additions to normal action. Improvement comes by elimination.

**N** N is essentially of the same general character as M except that it may be produced with the mouth open. This is a tremendous advantage, and should not be overlooked in practice. Place tongue at roots of upper front teeth. The tongue will completely block the tone from coming through the mouth, but a good deal will come down from the nose through the teeth, and doubtless also through the teeth of the lower jaw and find egress through the mouth. This is the reason for keeping the mouth open as wide as possible. The difference in tonal volume is marked; enough, in fact, to make this system of consonant production feasible in this particular case. It is in such small ways that modern science frequently achieves its most startling results; so pray do not overlook the minutest of these apparently trifling details. The system stands or falls by their observance. Do not forget the breathed attack for this consonant as for all others. Keep mouth open for N no matter how high or low the pitch. On extreme high tones it is not necessary to block the mouth completely, with the tongue. It can be made practically identical with the L without interfering with the diction.

**R** R should be rolled or trilled (vibrated), and well sustained in practice, thus establishing a definite tone. Treated thus it is one of the best diaphragm stimulators we have, and is also a splendid resonator. If the rolling is done awkwardly or stiffly, it tends to throaty placement, but this will pass with practice, and the effect of a rapidly trilled R is fine in every way. Some find themselves unable to roll the R, but it should be mastered as they will otherwise miss one of the best means of voice culture. It is really essential to good diction, for the only alternative we have is the hateful, so-called "western" R, an inherently ugly and uncouth sound. When followed by a vowel, the production of the latter may be subdivided. (a) Cease vibrating tongue, (b) add vowel at leisure.

**V** V is usually gutturalized (grunted) by the average singer, and used in that way, it is both ugly and harmful. No difficulty will be experienced if the singer will place the lower lip lightly against the edges of the upper front teeth and exhale (gently, at first), not forgetting the breathed attack. Clear thinking of the pitch is also indispensable in all these demonstrations.

**Z** Z is, perhaps, all things considered, the most valuable voice cultivator we have. Place the teeth together, keeping the lips well away

from them and from each other. The tip of the tongue is poised just back of the teeth, midway between the floor and roof of the mouth. It should not touch either, lest it interfere with the free egress of the tone. Like the others it must not be forced or sung hastily or thoughtlessly, or a horribly guttural sound will result. It is very rich in mouth resonance, well backed up by head resonance, and places the tone so far forward, and under such severe restrictions, that it is almost impossible to sing the succeeding vowel or consonant incorrectly. It is a fine exterminator of the feline vowel. If an exercise is desired for this, let a prolonged Z be followed by the vowel—very short—followed instantly by another Z. By shortening the vowel excessively the most hardened feline offender may be brought instantly to terms. He will not have time to flex the muscles involved in the production of the undesirable quality. For old singers, in whom the feline quality has become so fixed by long continued habit that the "wiriness" of tone seems really a part of the voice, it will be a god-send. Z also colors the vowel brilliantly, and is particularly effective in blending registers. The whole register problem melts away before it, but this is true of each and every one of the vocals, when properly treated. Even the explosives and hissters will force the proper register, but their production must be exactly right, especially when the situation is critical. The Z even when indifferently rendered will attend to this all-important matter unfailingly. It also has a strong tendency to keep the diaphragm from napping.

**TH** TH (hard) as in "this," is systematically gutturalized by almost every singer, and no act more harmful could be imagined, or one having greater possibilities for damage to the succeeding vowel. The foreign born always dread the TH, but they produce it quite as well as English or Americans, once the process is clear to them. The tip of the tongue is extended between the teeth for about a quarter of an inch. It is curled upward slightly, just covering the edges of the upper teeth. Then comes the gentle, relaxing, but positive push of the diaphragm, without which none of these consonants could be used for the purpose I am describing. Like the Z it is placed so far forward that it insures a fine vowel placement, and as its very nature precludes the idea of forcing, it is particularly effective in the upper voice.

**Z** Z (azure)—S in treasure—is easily produced, and is quite as valuable as the others, having its own peculiar and characteristic resonance. Place teeth together, with tongue-tip free and curled upward, forming a cup. Keep lips and tongue away from teeth.

**NG** NG, as in "ring", is produced with the teeth far apart, the tongue-tip resting against the base of the lower front teeth while the middle presses firmly against the roof of the mouth.

In closing, it may be reiterated that the free and relaxed, but powerful, impulse of the diaphragm, taking the form of an inaudible **Breathed** H is the basis of the whole tonal fabric. Without it the tone will in all probability come with the throaty effect **Attack.** so familiar to all musical ears. Thus in the twinkling of an eye we may find ourselves back on the old basis of consonant production, treating them as the necessary nuisances of tone production. Remember also that when the vowel comes, the volume of breath should be increased (slightly) rather than diminished.

All these consonants have certain qualities in common. They are far easier of perfect production than the vowels, in that they offer **Vocal** less opportunity for insane grabbings by throat muscles **Consonants.** having no rightful part in the vocal process. They are much less sensitive to differing degrees of breath pressure; it is almost impossible to do them incorrectly after a little practice. Again, they convey, or "pipe", the force of the diaphragm to the forward part of the mouth from which point it is immediately available for the following vowel or consonant. When the consonant is merely articulated, spoken or pronounced, according to prevailing custom, the force must travel all the way from the diaphragm itself; a long road, on which many untoward happenings may come to pass.

When the careful following out of all directions fails to produce a good tone, do not jump to the conclusion that the voice is at fault. It will be found in almost every case that the pupil's sense of tone quality is so strong that he has already subconsciously prepared it (the tone) in advance, and will hold it during the production of the consonant, no matter how faithfully the directions for the latter have been carried out. The imagined tone will, of course, appear in both vowel and consonant, the normal musical effect of the consonant having been spoiled.

This brings us face to face with a violent contrast to the teaching of other methods, which in some form or other conjure the pupils to **Imitation.** "picture to themselves a beautiful tone", either by imagination or by copying the tone of another voice. Often this vicious pedagogical principle appears insidiously in the demand or expectation that the pupil will be able to copy his own voice. That is, to remember and produce some particularly good tone on Wednesday

which he made on Monday. In all these cases the principle is the same. The vocal mechanism is called upon to reproduce **Conventional Methods.** a certain mental concept of a tone. Precisely the same principle is involved when the pupil is asked to correct the tone by making it brighter or richer, etc. I am not denying the ability of the voice to respond to such a demand. Its capacity in this regard is astonishing, but I insist that it should never, under any circumstances, be employed in the development of vocal technique, or in singing. There is not one chance in a million that the resultant tone, good as it may be, is the best of which the voice is capable at the moment. Even if by great good luck it were, and could be reproduced at will, the voice would certainly fail to improve and develop, for the habit of reproducing this particular quality would prevent normal changes in the organ. Pupils of great talent may learn to sing in this way and succeed fairly well for a few years, but normal vocal development will be interfered with, and the career blighted. Nothing in life is as pitiful as a case of arrested development, and in voice culture the results are particularly harrowing as the voice simply cannot stand still. It must advance or retrograde by the very terms of its existence. Thus we see how it is possible for a singer who has a perfect method, apparently, to come to a failure quite as complete as his less fortunate fellow vocalist. This also accounts in part, for the failure of great voices in later years.

**Lost Voices of Great Singers.** In their youth let us assume, for the sake of argument, that their habit of singing was perfect. As years went on, they became famous and satisfied, and simply tried to reproduce the tone of their youth. In this they succeeded so well that development was arrested with the effect outlined above.

This "withering on the stem" is so frequent among the great, that it has come to be the general belief that after a certain age physical deterioration must inevitably take place. It is much easier to call it "old age" than to delve into obscure and remote causes. I therefore reject as fallacious the cornerstone of existing methods, the expectation that tone color may be consciously reproduced at will, with safety. That is why I am in a position to promise my reader, or any one else, a beautiful voice. These consonants can be produced on any pitch by anybody, and remove absolutely all fear of high, low or medium tones. The generous coloring of the vowel follows as the day the night. The degree of diaphragmatic pressure determines the degree of loudness or softness, and as correct poise is always present, there is nothing to prevent a

**Age and the Voice.**

full crescendo, or a perfect diminuendo at will, and quite without anything resembling effort.

The pupil must be held absolutely to the routine until he ceases to give evidence of impatience or a desire to get on with the song.

**Time Required.** In three months all difficulties may be cleared and correct habits be in the way of formation: often in less than a month. Once formed, rapidity of action comes with amazing promptness, due, doubtless, to the fact that all these processes are, in the last analysis, instinctive, and in reality we are returning to habits of childhood. Another reason is that we are pursuing the exact order in which the various acts come in actual singing. Suppose, for instance, a song begins with the word "the". All we have to do is to go ahead with our usual routine, first the TH and then the E. Nothing new or unexpected could possibly arise, as the procedure is exactly the same for all pitches and degrees of power, excepting only the widening of the jaw angle for top notes. The singer who has been

**Conventional Methods.** developed by *vowel* cultivation, on the other hand, must first summon up a vision of his placement for the vowel EE. This varies according to the register, so he must take the pitch into consideration in the forming of his "vision", and if it should happen to fall at the point of cleavage, he may come to grief unless he finds opportunity for a little preparatory scale practice to make sure that the registers are blended. Next he must somehow manage to hold this vision, and not let it get mussed up by the second step, which happens to be a backward step—back to the TH. He must now take thought as to just how he is going to get past this despised consonantal affliction so that he may revel in his beloved vowel. Unless everything is unusually propitious on that particular day he will almost certainly start the TH in the throat, although, of course, he will not notice it at the time, for he has not been trained to notice anything except the lovely tone he is going to make on that lovely vowel. His not noticing will not, however, prevent the TH from doing its little best to inflame the apparatus, and spoil the vowel. Even if he should be fortunate enough to get all this done correctly, the constant traveling back and forth is wearying and confusing, and when hundreds of words are sung in rapid succession, one of two disastrous results may be confidently expected. Either the mind will be put to a severe strain, or a good deal of incorrect action will occur. Such training invariably puts the cart before the horse, except where the phrase happens to begin with a vowel.

The Vocal Explosives, B D G and J, have one quality in common with the Voiceless Explosives, K P T and CH. They permit a strong

**Vocal Explosives.** breath pressure at the lips or tongue, which

**Voiceless Explosives.** we may call "packing", for convenience. The effect of this packing is to store great dia-

phragmatic force at the exact spot where it is needed for the production of the following vowel or consonant. When this is suddenly "unpacked" a real explosion takes place, and the tone is sure to come with good placement and notable brilliancy. This tempts to the exaggeration of the vowel, and extra care will have to be taken while exploding the consonant to exorcise the vowel demon. No pressure must be put upon the throat in the packing process, and the jaw must be dropped loosely for the vowel.

**B P** B and P are made by packing the breath against the lips as forcefully as possible, without interfering with the freedom of the throat. While holding them thus, attention may be given to the pitch

**D T** and to whatever follows. D and T are produced in the same way, except that the breath is packed against the tongue instead

**G K** of the lips. G and K present no essentially different features, except that the explosion occurs as a result of dropping the back, instead of the tip of the tongue. The further forward this takes place the better. Singers are prone to preface these two with a tentative N; just enough of the N sound to prevent a clean G or K and not enough to be recognized as N. It is this sort of thoughtless muddling

**J CH** which makes half the trouble in learning to sing. J (soft G) and CH are treated the same except that both tongue and jaw

are dropped simultaneously for the explosion, the mouth having been previously held tightly closed under full pressure of breath. These explosives are all great voice trainers in that they place the tone well forward, and stimulate the diaphragm to full activity, thus imparting a clean, decisive attack, and a noticeably ringing quality to the tone. They develop a great deal of elasticity and strength in the diaphragm, and are especially useful in giving the idea of singing fortissimo. They also impart a forceful and dramatic character to the delivery where the text calls for these effects. These consonants, such good friends

when treated exactly right, are great mischief makers when left to work their own sweet will. No matter how many years the singer has been running his scales on lovely AH's and OH's, they are quite capable of torpedoing his beautiful craft, and sending his voice and all his vocal hopes to Davy Jones's locker.

Sibilants or Hissers, F S SH and TH (think) must be blown with considerable force. They get the diaphragmatic engine buzzing merrily, quite in the manner of the motor-cyclist who runs beside his machine for a few steps in starting.

**F S SH TH** The cycler hops on without stopping his engine, and so must the singer let the tone come without checking the breath. Otherwise they are self-evidently simple in treatment. One fact may be

**Consonants in Diction.** emphasized, however. These hissers really are "just noises" and have no carrying power comparable to that

of the vowels, or even of the other consonants, and as they make no appeal to the sense of beauty, are likely to be given too softly. This is a common failing among singers. Those within a few feet of the singer hear him softly singing, but those a few feet farther away are only conscious of some one "'of'ly 'ingin' ". When forcibly rendered, these sibilants get the diaphragm well started and so assist materially in achieving a good musical effect with whatever follows. They also afford excellent opportunity for pitch thinking. In the foregoing remarks we have been concerned only with voice cultural values. Faultless diction comes as an incident, a mere by-product, the artistic value of which will be referred to in a later chapter.

## CHAPTER VI

### INTERMEDIATE VOWELS AND CONSONANTS

#### VOWELS AFTER CONSONANTS



LL consonants and vowels except the first and last of a phrase are classed as Intermediates. We will first consider vowels coming after consonants. These have been mentioned in the preceding chapter to some extent. The vowels themselves present no new problem, as their formation has already been described in Chapter IV. In general it may be said that their production is much easier after a consonant as pitch, placement and breath-flow are all attended to by the consonant, or at least allowed for in the production of the consonant. The sole idea is to add the vowel shaping without disturbing these all important factors of tone production. It is not so simple as might appear, though, for it is quite possible to change the basis altogether without noticing it. Some recognize these changes when their attention is called to them, but others simply cannot see "any difference" for a long time. Ability to sense these infinitesimal mechanical values readily constitutes one of the most important elements in vocal talent. However, it all amounts to about the same thing in the end. It is only a question of patience and perseverance. The slow pupil will finally develop the vocal faculty, and in addition, will be rich in these two qualities, while the gifted pupil may never acquire them. The old hare and tortoise fable still holds good, even in this most paradoxical of all occupations, modern voice culture.

Our concern is not so much with the vowels themselves as with their relationship to the preceding consonants. It will not be necessary to specify the vowels individually as they are all subject to precisely the same general laws. Another observation may be made before

**Perfect Vowels not  
Necessary at First.** proceeding with the subject in detail. It is not indispensable that the vowel be perfectly produced in the beginnings of vocal study. We can get along very well with an indifferent vowel, or with no vowel at all. The perfect vowel can wait, and as there are so many matters which must be absolutely perfect from the start, we are only too glad to avail ourselves of any license of this sort. But the dispensation is granted only with the distinct understanding that its place shall not be usurped. In other words, you need not sing the vowel in the

way I have described, provided you do not sing it in some other way. It is quite possible to have a perfect tone with a poor vowel or no vowel, so if the pupil should by any chance forget his vowel "manners" it will be forgiven him seventy times seven. But woe to him if in its place he inserts one of his own manufacture, *making* it with the muscles of tongue or throat, eye brows or forehead, or in any of the dozen ways whereby singers delude themselves to their undoing.

Some may profit by the license, but it will be found more often that unless the vowel is made right it will be made wrong, so the safest way is to try very hard to remember the directions for vowel formation. There is another license applying to the vowel preceded by a consonant. Its production is one of the few acts which may be changed and corrected while the tone is being sung. Generally it is better to let a fault continue than to try to correct it while singing. If not very bad it gives the pupil opportunity to observe the harm done, and he can best "correct" it by resolving to be more careful next time. If *very* bad, he should stop abruptly and go on with the next tone after taking fresh breath, not forgetting to allow a moment for the nerves and muscles to recover their balance.

**L** A vowel preceded by L is in a very favorable situation. The mouth being already open, the process may be divided. First let the tongue-tip down very gently so as not to disturb the placement of the tone or the flow of breath. The formation of the vowel may then be completed by gradually dropping the jaw, likewise taking care not to disturb the placement of the tone. If the vowel calls for extended mouth corners they may be shaped after the mouth is opened if necessary. In most cases when this has been done successfully the singer will not realize that a vowel is being produced. It will sound to him like a slightly enhanced prolongation of the consonant, if the latter should chance to be a vocal. This is a sign that the vowel has been correctly produced, and the impression should be stored in the memory as a criterion for future use, where the vowel production is more difficult.

**M** M is not so friendly to the vowel which succeeds it, as it is necessary to open the lips and jaws simultaneously. Add to this the heavy breath flow demanded by it, tempting the singer to check when the vowel is sung, and it may be seen that this grandest of resonators is not at all docile in the learning stage. After all, it is simply a matter of dropping the jaw with idiotic relaxation, "blowing" with all one's might, and shaping the vowel with exaggerated correctness. Also call upon your

guardian angel to keep and preserve you from pronouncing the vowel.

**R** R when properly rolled is exceedingly favorable to the following vowel. After a good robust R it is almost impossible to check the breath. Still more helpful is the fact that the process may be divided. (a) Cease vibrating tongue, and allow a moment to intervene without checking the tone. This tone will be utterly without vowel color. It will furnish an opportunity to verify the statement that a fine tone, true to the pitch, perfectly poised and of good volume and quality may be sung independently of any vowel coloring whatever. Ability to sense this will result in a genuine revelation when it comes to the singing of high pitches. It is only necessary to continue this same vowel-less tone, which may be done with ease, and when the jaw is opened the top note mystery is solved. (b) After the tongue is quiet the vowel shaping may be added at leisure, the more gradually, the better. Ability to discriminate in these delicate values will be of inestimable service when the pupil becomes more advanced.

**V** V is very favorable, as the tone is focused outside the teeth to begin with, the breath flow strong and the vibration of the bones of the face particularly well defined. Unless the vowel shaping is bungled the tonal result will be most satisfying.

**N** N, being produced with the mouth open, like the L and R, allows the subdivision of the vowel. Drop tongue-tip cautiously so as not to disturb the tone, and then let jaw fall into place as gently and flexibly as possible. Here we come again into touch with the vowel-less tone and are in a position to add little or much of vowel color at will. In the middle range a brilliant vowel coloring may be expected and indulged. On the top notes it will be very faint indeed, although the illusion of a vowel may be produced by clever consonant production. This gives the hearer an extra guess at the word, and if he gets it right his imagination will supply the missing vowel color so quickly that he may well be cheated in the matter. The treatment of NG is similar; the back, instead of the tip, of the tongue is dropped.

**Z** Z reproduces all the favorable traits of the V, and is a stronger resonator. Being especially rich in mouth resonance it imparts a generous lustre to the vowel.

**TH** TH presents unusual opportunities for throat contraction, but if resisted will reward with a vowel of light, floating, disembodied quality, altogether charming, and of delicate texture. It illustrates

vividly the fact that the less the singer interests himself in the tone of the vowel, the better it will be. The vowel-devotee is forever "killing with kindness" the object of his affection.

**Z** (azure) combines to a remarkable degree the virtues of **M Z** and **TH**. It gives to the vowel approximately the richness of the **M**, the easy placement of the **Z** and the tender, floating quality of the **TH**. The French language is very rich in this favorable consonant.

The production of a vowel after the Vocal-Explosives, **K P T** and **CH** is very easy, once the singer has grasped the distinction I am about to indicate. It boils down to this: explode the **K P T CH** consonant, but do not explode the vowel. Compress the breath against the consonant as much as you wish, but the instant it is released, let the breath flow steadily and evenly during the production of the vowel. Breath control by relaxation safeguards the situation perfectly. The musical effect is very fine. They give forwardness of placement infallibly, and impart crispness to the attack and vim and brilliancy to the vowel. Let the tone go where it will.

The Sibilants, **F S SH** and **TH** are nearly always slighted, flouted or frankly ignored. Their sound is unpleasant, to be sure, but if you omit them entirely no one will know what you are singing about, and if given in a half-hearted way they do not appreciably help the diction and detract from the dignity of the style and interfere with the purity of the vowel tone. When given with the requisite force of the diaphragm they fulfil their mission with efficiency, imparting clearness to the diction and steadying the vowel, through the freely flowing air column. Great discretion must be used where an explosive or sibilant is immediately followed by a word beginning with a vowel or the words will sound run together.

**Word-Connection.** Thus "bud of" would sound like "bu dof". If time is taken to come to a full stop between them the phrasing will be broken and choppy. Of course, there is the usual device of ignoring the **D** altogether, but that has its difficulties too, and is foredoomed to failure, clouding the diction and spoiling the tone. It is emphatically true of these consonants that unless properly treated they will create serious trouble. To circumvent this difficulty, **B D G** and **J** must be shorn of their explosive character. They may be produced lightly and released instantly, scarcely interfering with the tone at all. Thus they are given clearly, and the

connection between the words preserved without roughness of phrasing or false accent.

The treatment of K P T and CH is not so simple. They are out and out tone checkers, and are not capable of compromise renderings. There is only one cure. The sharpness of the explosion must be toned down, which, of course, involves the slowing down of the diaphragm, an act so fraught with danger that it should never be required except where absolutely necessary. The only other case where it becomes necessary is in softening the tone, which will be treated later. The breath is not packed before the consonant, and a slight accent falls on the vowel. Thus, in the twinkling of an eye, we may find ourselves back on the old basis, menaced by all the old-time vocal bugaboos, unless we keep constantly in mind the fact that this is the one and only concession we make to the old time theory of consonant production. The obvious caution is to refrain from throttling down the breath too much and from placing too strong an accent on the succeeding vowel.

### CONSONANTS AFTER VOWELS

The whole theory of production of consonants after vowels is summed up in one sentence. Whatever is to be done should be done quickly and positively. Slow action, so admirable in producing a vowel after a consonant, will, in most cases, open the way for a false vowel sound just before the consonant, and may even jeopardize the purity of the consonant itself. In passing from A to R, for instance, bring the jaws together quickly and decisively, and get the R under way without lost motion. A sluggish closing will afford an opportunity for the rogue vowel U to creep in and invite a general muddling of breath control and placement before the consonant is finished. It is often possible to take advantage of the juxtaposition of consonants and vowels which call for an identical position of the jaws. In the word "along", for example, A (rogue vowel) and L both call for an almost wide open jaw. In fact this entire word may be rendered without once changing the jaw angle. The A is transformed into L by a light flip of the tongue-tip to the base of the upper front teeth. Another flip back, together with the extension of the mouth corners gives a perfect O (aw). A flip of the back of the tongue against the roof of the mouth, accompanied by the relaxing of the mouth corners gives a perfect NG. The vanish is accomplished by simply removing the tongue from the roof of the mouth. The movement may be very slight, and should be performed slowly, and with great caution, lest the tone be too much affected by

its withdrawal. If the action is too sudden, there is danger of losing the fine balance of mouth and head resonance insured by the NG, which makes the finish or vanish a thing of beauty. The whole word will be colored by the ethereal quality of the L, and it can be seen how easy is the vocal process when rationally undertaken, and how exact its demonstrations.

No problem worthy the name comes up in the treatment of consonants after vowels, except the universal tendency to check the breath, and let the vocal cords relax just before a consonant.

**Law of Pitch.** No matter how high or low the pitch, the cords are obliged by their very nature to retain their tension until the brain withdraws its demand; that is, until it ceases to think the pitch. Pitch being purely a matter of mind, so far as the singer is concerned, it follows that diaphragm, register, placement, resonance and so forth have nothing to do with it, except indirectly. Ignorance of this law is the cause of much bad intonation and tone production, generally. The mind controls the cords as the moon controls the tides; no one sees the force, but we all know it is there. The Nova Scotians would never be so unwise as to begin pumping, because the water in the Annapolis Basin fell twenty feet in a few hours. They know that if they wait a few hours the moon will raise it again, and higher than all the pumps in Canada, if they worked continuously for a hundred years. Not even as sensible as the pumping process is the singer's frantic attempt to gain or regain pitch by the use of diaphragmatic or throat muscles, or by a change of placement. Yet I will wager that if you ask your favorite soprano to sing the word "world" on a high pitch, A, for instance, she will either ignore the consonants altogether or do this very thing: let the vocal cords sag before the R, and then struggle by muscular action to regain the pitch. She may succeed in regaining the pitch, but if she does it will be through the action of the mind, re-asserting the pitch thought, and in spite of the muscular grabbings. These struggles are so bad for the voice that once the habit is formed, no amount of pitch thinking will avail. It is in this way that sopranos and tenors lose, or fail to develop high tones. The same principle operates in the case of low voices, except that it is the low tones which disappear, or fail to appear, as a general rule.

## CONSONANT CONNECTION

The artistic connection of consonants rests largely upon the ability to produce a perfect neutral tone; meaning by that a tone having no

**Neutral Tone (Tonal Hyphen).** vowel color, already mentioned, and to be described more fully later, under the "Vanish". When any vocal is followed by another vocal, or by a vocal-explosive, they may or may not be joined by a neutral tone, subject to their place in the phrase. When this neutral tone, which we will christen the "tonal hyphen", is used, it greatly accentuates both consonants. At times this emphasis is very desirable, as when words are to be joined. "All men" would thus be rendered "All-u-men". Bear in mind that this representation of the tonal hyphen by U is very inadequate, so far as the actual musical effect is concerned. Being a tone without vowel color, there is naturally no satisfactory way of representing it. The neutral tone, however, has been described with sufficient exactness to convey an accurate idea to the reader, I think, and the symbol will answer until a better one is invented. This U between all and men brings both the L and M into appropriately bold relief, besides connecting the words smoothly, preserving a good cantabile. Where two consonants of a single word are to be joined it is not desirable to emphasize them, sufficient clarity being obtained by closely blending them. For example, in "Almost" the L and the M would be joined without cessation of tone or the use of the tonal hyphen, simply by dropping the tongue-tip to complete the L and instantly closing the lips for the M. The breath pressure should remain equal and uninterrupted. The result will be absolute connectedness accompanied by sufficient clearness to meet the demands of good diction.

When the final consonant of a word is a vocal, and is followed by a voice-less explosive, K P T or CH, or by a sibilant, F C TH or SH, the same principle holds good. Thus in the word "Work" the R and K would be rendered without the tonal hyphen. In "were coming", on the other hand, the tonal hyphen would be used in joining the R to the K (c).

When any consonant is followed by a vocal in a musical setting which calls for a prolongation of the second consonant, a vowel, the modified U, is interpolated, thus: Peop(u)le, Ab(u)le, Is(u)n't, etc. Other combinations of consonants are amenable to treatment detailed in a former chapter, and call for no special comment.

### VOWELS AFTER VOWELS

Vowels after vowels present no difficulties. All that is required is to form them correctly and keep the breath going steadily, which it will do of its own accord, unless interfered with in some way. For

example, in passing from EE to OO it is only necessary to extend the mouth corners. From EE to A (day) simply to drop the jaw. From EE to A (harp) to drop jaw wide. From EE to AW to drop jaw wide and extend lips, and so on. The main thing is to make sure that these acts are really performed, and not merely imagined. A hand mirror will correct any weakness in this respect.

### DIPHTHONGS

For diphthongs no special treatment is necessary. A mystery is sometimes made of these, as if some new principle entered into their production. It is said that I will sound like AH-EE, etc., but close observation will show that the unpleasant effect is due to the fact that the vowels were "made" (feline) vowels in the first place, or that the mouth was closed too suddenly. Avoid making diphthongs out of vowels by closing jaw slowly, as "Tell" changed to "Te(u)ll."

The pupil is warned here, as elsewhere, not to be misled by the spelling of words. The singer must become adept in reducing a word to its phonetic constituents, paying no attention to the mere spelling. He must always be on the look-out for concealed vowels, too. For example in singing the word "Yet" one might be tempted to pay primary attention to the E which would be a great mistake. It is the EE concealed under the Y which should receive the principal attention. The E is produced merely by relaxation, the same as if it had been preceded by a consonant. Thus it is the OO in "Weep" and in "World" which needs emphasis and attention. The singer will be surprised to see how many of his worries are due to such simple little matters as these. Not the least damaging effect of slighting any part of the vocal process is the fact that it inevitably places too much energy on some other part. The point so "favored" often suffers more than the one which has been overlooked. While on the

**Singing Worries.** subject of singing worries it may not be out of place to say that if the pupil would pay attention to what he is told, and not spend his energy in wondering if it will pay him to keep on with his lessons, how long it is going to be before he can sing, whether his voice is really worth while, whether the teacher doesn't think him an awful fool, etc., etc., he would find learning to sing almost too easy to be interesting. It is strange how rare is the ability to give strict attention to anything, after the sixth year. After

**Faulty School Training.** his "education" begins, the pupil is often difficult to reach in a direct way. A campaign is generally necessary to gather his wandering thoughts, or he

will concentrate so savagely upon one particular aspect of the matter in hand as to disturb the balance, so necessary in all things vocal. The pupil under six scarcely needs even to be told. His powers of observation are so acute that he will grasp the essential features of a demonstration almost without a word of explanation. Show me a person who is capable of giving me his undivided attention, and I will guarantee in due time a singer with a real voice. Where there are fixed bad habits to overcome, extra resistance must be expected, of course.

In all double vowel sounds we place the emphasis upon the first, exactly as if it were a consonant, relaxing for the second. This always gives a good result, and, incidently, throws light **Emphasis in Double-Vowels.** upon the benefit derived from our method of treating consonants. It proves beyond question that it is partly psychological, having the effect of preventing too great concentration upon the succeeding vowel. In addition to this merit, is, of course, the property of generating resonance, which appertains exclusively to the consonant.

### WORD CONNECTION

Impeccable smoothness and distinctness in word-connection are extremely important elements in artistic phrasing. We are chiefly concerned with the first of the two words to be connected, as the initial sound of the second seldom presents any new problem.

### WHEN A VOWEL FOLLOWS A VOWEL

No problem arises here except when the vowel sounds are identical, and, likewise, occur on pitches which are identical. Differentiation may be secured by slightly varying the shaping for the second one. Example: "thE—Evening". The second E might be rendered by a slightly wider opening of the mouth. Above all, avoid the glottic stroke on the second E.

**WHEN A VOWEL IS FOLLOWED BY A VOCAL CONSONANT (L M N R V Z TH NG)** it is only necessary to insist upon continuity of tone and equality of breath-pressure. Here, as everywhere, avoid superfluous movements. The L in "thO—Lost", for instance, may be produced without closing the mouth. In this case still further economy may be practiced as the vowel following the second L calls for similar shaping. It will only be necessary to drop the jaw slightly, and the extended mouth corners may be left unchanged during the execution of the L. These are small values, but it is by the "sum-total"

of many such that we make good our claim of adding forty years to the life of the singing voice, a not inconsiderable gain in the light of the ancient proverb, "Ars longa, vita brevis est". It may be added that it will enable the grocer's boy around the corner to finally sing with a voice and style comparable to those of the finest vocal artists. Of course, this boy will need to begin very early in life, and really want to sing instead of *thinking* that he wants to sing.

**WHEN A VOWEL IS FOLLOWED BY A VOCAL-EXPLOSIVE, (B D G J),** the same rule applies, except that if dramatic effect is desired, the tone may stop while the breath is "packed" for the Explosive, thus enhancing its effect: "sO—Great". If the second tone comes on a high pitch, be sure to think it accurately while "packing".

**WHEN A VOWEL IS FOLLOWED BY A VOICELESS-EXPLOSIVE, (K P T CH),** the tone *must* cease while the Explosive is being "packed". "wE—Pray".

**WHEN A VOCAL CONSONANT (L M N R V Z TH NG) IS FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER VOCAL** the Tonal Hyphen is used without cessation of tone or breath-pressure, "bellS(u)Rang". When the S and R are on different pitches, allow no uncertainty in their respective intonations.

**WHEN A VOCAL (L M N R V Z TH NG) IS FOLLOWED BY A VOCAL EXPLOSIVE (B D G J)** allow no cessation of tone except where emphasis is desired, as, "aLL Black". Insist on clean rendering of the Explosive (B).

**WHEN A VOCAL (L M N R V Z TH NG) IS FOLLOWED BY A VOICELESS-EXPLOSIVE (K P T CH)** use very short Tonal Hyphen (neutral-tone "finish") after the Vocal, followed by complete cessation of tone preparatory to the Explosive. Example: "haS(u)Taught".

**WHEN A VOCAL (L M N R V Z TH NG) IS FOLLOWED BY A SIBILANT (F S SH TH)** the Vocal is followed by a short Tonal Hyphen, while the tone definitely ceases, and the diaphragm very definitely hisses the Sibilant. Example: "haV(u)Thought".

**WHEN A VOCAL-EXPLOSIVE (B D G J) IS FOLLOWED BY A VOCAL (L M N R V Z TH NG)** the tone must not cease. Pass flexibly and swiftly from the Explosive to the Vocal, the latter being executed with special care and exactness. Example:

"maDe (*u*) THem". Be on guard against slovenly intonation of the D and TH, especially on extreme pitches.

WHEN A VOCAL-EXPLOSIVE (B D G J) IS FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER VOCAL-EXPLOSIVE use short Tonal Hyphen after the first, without checking the tone for the second, except where emphasis is desired. Example: "anD(*u*)Gray".

WHEN A VOCAL-EXPLOSIVE (B D G J) IS FOLLOWED BY A VOICELESS-EXPLOSIVE (K P T CH) use a very short Tonal Hyphen followed by silence while the breath is being "packed" for the Voiceless-Explosive. Example: "raGe(*u*)Tore".

WHEN A VOCAL-EXPLOSIVE (B D G J) IS FOLLOWED BY A SIBILANT (F S SH TH) treatment is similar. The Tonal Hyphen is, of course, followed by the hissing sound of the Sibilant instead of silence. Example: "raGe(*u*)SHook". Set the vocal cords (think the pitch) definitely on the pitch of the "OO" while executing the SH.

WHEN A VOICELESS-EXPLOSIVE (K P T CH) IS FOLLOWED BY A VOCAL (L M N R V Z TH NG) great care must be taken to keep the Voiceless-Explosive *voiceless*. That is, to overcome the strong tendency to produce a guttural tone (grunt) after the Explosive. This is very difficult. Overcome the resistance by beginning with the Voiceless-Explosive in practice, omitting the rest of the word. Example: "aT—Last". Practise: "T—Last". Execute the Vocal with great care. Have mouth open for the "L".

WHEN A VOICELESS-EXPLOSIVE (K P T CH) IS FOLLOWED BY A VOCAL-EXPLOSIVE (B D G J) the same treatment applies, except that there will be another "grunt" to look out for before the Vocal-Explosive. Example: "saT—Down". Do not introduce guttural tone after the T or before the D. These gutturals (grunts) will cost you dear. I tell my pupils that Nature fines them twenty-five cents for each one, and takes her pay "out of" their voices. In other words, each error does distinct harm to the organ, and as there are scores of these possible in each song, it is easy to see how, in this item alone, we may add years to the life of the voice through a correct method.

WHEN A VOICELESS-EXPLOSIVE (K P T CH) IS FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER VOICELESS-EXPLOSIVE do not vocalize either one. Make the first explosion sharp and definite, and "pack" the second vigorously. Do not waste too much breath after the first.

The instant the first is exploded, place the tongue in position for the next, without in the least reducing the breath-pressure. Example: "sweet—Turn". Both T's must be *noises*, not tones, and good, sharp ones, at that.

WHEN THE VOICELESS-EXPLOSIVE (K P T CH) is FOLLOWED BY A SIBILANT (F S SH TH), be careful to refrain from vocalizing the former. Preserve the individual characteristics of both consonants by clear and definite execution of each. Example: "soft—Star-light". Insist on the sharp, but unvocalized, explosion of the T, and the vigorous hissing of the S.

WHEN A SIBILANT (F S SH TH) IS FOLLOWED BY ANY OTHER CONSONANT it is only necessary to insist on the exact execution of each.

WHEN ANY CONSONANT IS FOLLOWED BY ANY VOWEL the only danger lies in attacking the vowel too violently. After the more sharply explosive ones the breath-pressure must be slightly reduced in making the vowel. This is the one instance in tone production where lessening of the breath-pressure is necessary. One dislikes to admit any departure from the rule on theoretical grounds, but in actual practice it creates no difficulty. The diaphragm is only too willing to slow down!

H is merely an audible breathed attack. As by its nature it can only come at the beginning of a word, it is not difficult. It must not be made violently (contracting the throat) or with anything like a tone (guttural). It must come straight from the diaphragm. Example: "back—Home". Do not overdo the H by making a guttural sound or click, or even a too marked aspirate effect, lest freedom of throat be sacrificed.

## CHAPTER VII

### FINAL CONSONANTS AND VOWELS



HE stopping of a tone often appears to be quite as difficult as the starting. Here, as elsewhere in the treatment of consonants, singers seem to trust mostly to luck, conceiving it to be their chief mission to do over the already overdone vowel. But in this question of finals, by which we mean the consonant or vowel which closes the phrase, they have also the assistance of inspiration. This the vocal elect, meaning those who are "born with voices" seek in their favorite haunt, the opera. Let the submerged nine-tenths who have "no voices" fritter away their time juggling with consonants, if they will; as for them, they will go and hear the highest priced singer in the world and then "go home and do the same thing". Apparently the only things they hear are the finals. These are given by the great of earth in the form of what, stripped of all camouflage and stated in plain English, is nothing more nor less than a grunt. The operatic grunt is a magnificent affair, as befits the station of those who indulge in its perpetration. It is a sort of roaring grunt and is supposed to represent the most tempestuous and expensive emotions. Whatever the reader may think of it, as an artistic achievement, it is a plain fact that every aspiring professional, semi-professional, amateur and rank outsider, young or old, male or female, "loveth and maketh" it. So shines the light of a naughty star in this innocent world. It matters not how great his true brilliancy in legitimate lines, they will have none of it. But let him send forth one naughty twinkle, and the inspiration mongers are in full cry. A pretense is set up that it is for dramatic effect, but it is much more likely that it is due to lack of precise knowledge of the nature and treatment of finals; in other words, to get away from the tone without breaking. The practice is very hard on the voice, being essentially a contraction of the throat, and has a tendency, like all spasmodic action, to become a habit. It might easily spread to the

**Instinct at the Opera.** initials and intermediates. The opera singer is not without excuse, for his breath is under tremendous pressure, and a break would be a break indeed. He realizes, instinctively (they are still doing things at the opera instinctively), that the breath must have some kind of buffer at the close of the phrase, hence the unpleasant effect I have had the hardihood to call by its right name.

The final of every phrase should receive careful, analytical attention, nothing being left to chance or instinct. Let us begin with the easier examples, the sibilants, F S SH and TH. It may seem absurd to remark that these are not to be vocalized, but such are the vicissitudes of vocalism, and the vagaries of instinct that the attempt is often made, "ditching" the placement and closing the throat. The way to conquer this troublesome habit is to slow up the tempo, taking plenty of time to clearly think out the act or the actions involved in each individual step in the process. The only danger attendant upon the delivery of the final sibilants is that the pupil will feel that the hissing sound is unpleasant, and therefore to be muffled. They call for a good hard push of the diaphragm. The same pressure which is already being applied to the preceding vowel or consonant will be exactly right. The rational plan, therefore, is to avoid all subtleties, and run plump into them with the full force of the diaphragm.

Precisely the same treatment governs the absolute tone-checkers, the voiceless-explosives, K P T and CH. The only difference lies in the fact that the breath must be stopped before the consonant can be enunciated. Stopping the breath does not necessarily mean relaxing the pressure, however. Great care and discrimination will need to be exercised in this matter, for it is typical of those unnoted pitfalls which, although in themselves apparently insignificant, yet swallow up many a promising voice. The tone-checker should receive and hold the full impact of the breath pressure; when released it will finish the phrase with a good, clean dramatic explosion. The voiceless consonant, being unvocalized, calls for no further skill whatever.

### NEUTRAL TONE FINISH OR VANISH

All the vocals and vocal explosives are accorded practically the same treatment when occurring as finals. No new principle is involved until we come to the vanish, or finish. This consists in the addition of a short, but not abrupt neutral tone, faintly resembling, but not to be confounded with, UH. The placement and color of the tone are identical with those of the consonant. Herein lies the problem. If the singer were discriminating enough to refrain from introducing an alien color, the problem would be solved. Most singers, however, will yield to the temptation to take away some of the nose and head resonance when the consonant is released, introducing an alien vowel coloring. This gives us the vowel U, which not only has nothing to

do with the pronunciation of the word, but is inherently ugly, as well, being a rogue.

**N NG** N and NG are favorable as they are very rich in nose resonance, and the finish or vanish may be supplied by the simple expedient of very cautiously and slowly removing the tongue from the roof of the mouth. The movement may be very slight indeed, and it should not be difficult to refrain from producing a vowel sound, i. e., an alien quality.

**L TH** For L and TH (this), when difficulty is experienced, this "exercise" may be tried. A very light flip of the tongue downward may be followed by UN; repeat, refraining from actually producing the N, but retaining the same tonal effect. This will give exactly the neutral tone coloring necessary for a good finish or vanish.

**V Z Z** V Z and Z (azure) respond to the same treatment, made slightly more difficult, however, by the fact that the mouth must be opened. This, of course, increases the tendency to introduce alien vowel coloring. If difficulty is experienced, add the UN as described above, subsequently omitting the N.

**R** For R it is only necessary to cease vibrating the tongue. The tone which will result will be the exact neutral quality which supplies the material for a perfect finish or vanish. The teeth are separated slightly to allow for the free egress of the tone.

**M** M is rather difficult, as the removal of the lips has a tendency to focus the tone there, thus changing the established proportion of mouth and head resonance. If the lips are parted gently and very, very slightly, without changing the breath pressure, the true neutral finish will result.

**B** B is hard for the same reason, and recourse to the UN exercise may be necessary.

**D G J** D G and J are easier, as the tongue is used, and the focal point of the tone is farther back. In the case of J the jaw must also be dropped. The cure, in case difficulty is experienced is the same, viz., add UN until the N can be safely dispensed with.

All singers manifest a desire to soften this finishing tone, due probably to an instinctive desire to round off the phrase in a graceful manner. But as this introduces another element of difficulty—slowing down the breath pressure—it is well to keep the finishing tone full until considerable skill has been acquired. Besides, the sense of the text

frequently calls for a full tone. The true vanish is merely a finishing neutral tone which gradually fades away. It is in this fading away that the danger arises. The tone fades in volume, but it must not lose its color. It is better not to think or say too much about the vanish until the finish has been thoroughly mastered. Otherwise the temptation to get that lovely vanishing quality right away will be too strong to be resisted, in which case the breath pressure will certainly be reduced too suddenly, producing an unpleasant effect of caving in or slumping, with loss of placement and resonance. The safest way is to keep on singing the "vanish" exactly as loud as the consonant until the singer recovers from his eagerness to produce a beautiful vanish. It will then be a simple thing to suggest that the breath be allowed to die down, great care being taken to prevent a too sudden diminution of pressure.

### FINAL VOWELS

The final vowels are far simpler in treatment. It is only necessary to refrain from changing the shaping, and too suddenly reducing the breath pressure. When a soft, lingering vanish is desired, the pressure is lessened very gradually. This need not be attempted until the pupil is well advanced, for it requires a finely trained diaphragm to get just the right adjustment. The chances are that the pupil will do this "by himself" in due time. In the meantime, finish without change of pressure, using an inaudible H as the vowel ceases, to prevent the throat from closing. Theoretically the vowel finish is easier to acquire than the consonant finish, but I imagine that in actual practice, most pupils will gain facility through good consonant production, and then apply their increased skill to the vowel. The soft or the loud finish may thus be achieved at the close of any vowel or vocalized consonant.

Thus simply are produced not only perfect dramatic finishes, but also those lovely nuances and vanishes for which the voice is justly famous. As the breath pressure grows gradually less  
**The Vanish.** and less, and finally ceases altogether, so the voice diminishes in power, but not in loveliness, until it finally fades away, it is hard to tell exactly when, leaving a faint after-glow of tone. So easily is this master stroke of vocalism achieved that beginners sometimes produce it perfectly, while utterly unaware of its splendid musical effect. The organist, to get a corresponding effect, would need to manipulate swell pedals, shift keyboards and go through an elaborate stop-juggling performance, often requiring great individual skill, and a different routine for each occasion. The pianist must play

softer and softer, relaxing his muscles more and more, until he finishes in an agony lest the mechanism will refuse to speak at all.

It is hard to describe in words the musical effect of a fine-spun vanish in a way to be of practical service. It may be roughly compared to the effect produced by suddenly removing the violin bow from the string; an echo in effect; a murmur of the wood. We have caricatures of the vanish running all the way from the guttural Indian "Ugh" to the thin, mouthy "Uh", which introduces the hideous feline vowel in its most aggravating form. Singers of the more refined stamp, realizing the grotesqueness of these sounds, and not knowing how to produce the proper effect, are prone to consign the whole problem to the aesophagus; swallow them, that is to say. This method has two drawbacks: first, that the audience would need to be clairvoyant to gather any meaning from the words; second, the effect on the vocal apparatus, which is pernicious in the extreme.

The vanish is not possible with the absolute tone-checking consonants, of course. An interesting principle comes to light in this connection, however, having to do with the artistic side of phrasing. By producing them as directed, the measure of diaphragmatic pressure used in the preceding vowel or consonant, proves to be the exact amount required for the artistic rendering of the tone-checking consonants. It would be hard to over-estimate the practical importance of this fact in the matter of artistic phrasing. We are all familiar with the agony of straining to catch the words, that is, the consonants,

**Diction Equalized  
by Breath Pressure.** particularly these finals we are just now discussing, so often are they forgotten, mumbled, or swallowed outright. But how much more frightful is the effect when the artist is "conscientious" about his enunciation, and smashes a final D or G at his audience with an explosion calculated to render them senseless! I don't know how the reader feels about it, but I would rather be unexpectedly struck by a large football than have one of these forty-two centimeter consonants banged against my ear drums. By the method I have indicated, artistic perfection in this regard becomes automatic.

Pupils are often worried for fear they will forget, and prolong the consonants unduly when singing. The natural tendency is all the other way. Even in practice there is no need to prolong them more than the dictates of good taste would justify. Once the distinction between singing and merely speaking them is fully grasped, and the habit formed, they will not require much thought—about the same as one would

give to walking down stairs; paying considerable attention to the first and last steps, and very little to the others. To the superficial student these long drawn-out directions may seem tiresome and superfluous. In practice, however, it will be found that it makes all the difference to have each detail thoroughly and minutely worked out and embodied in a routine which shall become subconscious. With it, the most unpromising pupils will, in time, do good work. Without it, the most talented "natural" singer will not keep his beautiful voice long enough to justify him in taking a single term of lessons. In the fulness of time his singing will become but "labor and sorrow".

We make no direct attempt to produce beautiful tones. We are content to form the habit of lingering lovingly on the consonants which,

**How the Voice Grows.** in due time, will give us tones more beautiful than the imagination could possibly have "pictured". While the vowel is the flower of all our efforts, it has no such voice-cultural value as the consonants, even the explosives and sibilants, acting powerfully and favorably through their effect upon the diaphragm. To test this, sing O as well as you can, placing the tips of the fingers upon the nose, cheek bones, forehead, crown and chest, noting the intensity of vibration of the various parts. Now try the experiment with M or V, and you will see that the vibrations are far more powerful than with the vowel. Its superiority in this regard will be the exact measure of its voice-cultural superiority. It is the persistent iteration of these powerful vibrations which finally changes the musical character of the voice. The various resonating spaces become so thoroughly attuned to diaphragmatic and vocal cord action, that the lightest touch will set them off, like a bad temper frequently indulged.

Precision of routine is insisted upon, every step being in accord with certain well-defined principles which we know to be fundamental and unchangeable. The necessity for this arises, not from any imperfection of the instrument. Quite the contrary. There are hundreds of ways of singing a vowel, all sounding good to the singer, and probably really good, too, from a musical point of view, yet all deviating slightly from the perfect standard. The perception of the singer is not equal to the task of distinguishing the differing degrees of merit. The teacher himself is liable to err and even if his judgment were infallible, it would not fully meet the situation. The pupil would not be able to reproduce the desired quality and would only become nervous in trying to do so. Only those inexperienced in vocal

matters will doubt this statement. The teachers who calmly ask their pupils to "picture to themselves a beautiful tone" and then expect them to go ahead and sing it, amaze me. It seems like asking a person to picture to himself a ten dollar bill, and then produce one. But, suppose for the sake of argument, that this remarkable pupil could really do that. Would not his organ be doomed to go on from day to day and year to year, without change, a sort of Flying Dutchman voice? But perhaps his teacher would rise to the colossal notion of asking him to "picture" an increasingly beautiful tone each day. No definite understanding could ever be established on such a flimsy basis, or on any basis which presupposes the ability of the pupil to adequately color the tone at will. The tone may be colored at will, I freely grant, but the result will inevitably be an inferior quality. The singer's attitude toward the tone should be one of mild interest, only. Only by laying down a hard and fast mechanical method of production which we know is right and which can be repeated with scientific exactness at all times, and in all conditions of health, can we be sure that the voice is doing its absolute best. Only by such an unvarying routine can a singer preserve his voice in full beauty and vigor to old age, and acquire the calm confidence which makes singing a pleasure. So multitudinous are the slightly wrong ways that one might conceivably go on singing for a life time without forming any definite method, or ever knowing what was going to happen next, or how it came about after it had happened. In practice, no singer could ever do this, for in ten years there would not be enough voice left to experiment with.

The story has its lighter side. Not one of these wrecks of a one-time singer can be found to admit that his vocal insolvency is due to a wrong method. Any singer would rather confess to a bad voice than to a bad method. They always date their loss of voice from some weird occasion, which somehow always reminds me of Paddy's "Year of the Big Wind", after which the voice mysteriously disappeared. Thus they contrive to wrap themselves in an atmosphere of tragedy and decayed grandeur, while the plain unvarnished fact is that they never knew the elementary principles of their business.

By our method the singer works his way into a definite, unchangeable routine which never varies in the slightest degree from the cradle to the grave. The method never changes, but everything else does. The voice never stays the same for a week at a time; it always has a surprise in store. The singer will have quite enough to do to keep up, musically, with the

different voices Nature will give him in the course of a life-time. And imagine keeping up with the endless procession of wonderful songs, and the pleasure to be derived from concerted work! Where everything else is changing, including the singer himself, it will be good to have one thing which never changes; the foundation of all achievement, the method.

In the first three months evidence will accumulate, musical and otherwise, that will convince him that he is on the right track, and that his voice is invariably at its best when he keeps closely to the rules. He will find this way of singing an unfailing source of enjoyment, and will have lost all doubt of his voice, and all fear of singing for others. His tone production will soon give him so little concern that he will be able to devote the cream of his mental and spiritual energies to the artistic and poetic side of his work.

This makes it possible for him to conform at all times to the basic principle, upon which all successful artistic endeavor must rest, **The Enjoying Attitude.** the enjoying attitude. I adhere rigidly to the rule that any problem which cannot be handled in a gay and jovial humor, or at worst, in a pleasantly meditative mood would better be postponed to a later time, or omitted altogether. It is natural for people to be happy and not much of real artistic worth will be accomplished in any other frame of mind. No grouchy musician can minister to my spiritual needs!

We are prone to misread the history of our art in this respect. Those musical task masters and slave-drivers who are wont to scourge their pupils to renewed struggle by recounting the herculean labors of the great masters, will find few to say them nay. Nevertheless, they are wrong. What they fail to take into account is that it was part of the genius of these heroes of the past that they tasted a divine joy in their work. They worked, but their work gave them pleasure, without which they might have perished from fatigue, perhaps. Read Polar Expedition literature, and you will see that it was always the big hulking laborer who gave out first, while the more highly strung and delicately organized leader was invariably the last to succumb. The enjoying attitude of one was measured by three meals a day, while the other was tasting in anticipation, the joy of thrilling the world with the story of his travels and discoveries. When artistic effort does not bring pleasure we may well have suspicions of its efficiency.

But the enjoying attitude is not at cross purposes with a studious attitude. I believe in Duty; in *driving* the youngsters to the piano,

**The Studious Attitude.**

when other methods fail: in having certain fixed hours for this or that daily duty: in scourging ourselves to do the thing we know we ought to do: but I do insist that those tasks, once we have forced ourselves to get at them, shall yield us pleasure, and that without too great delay. Otherwise I think we are justified in assuming that there is something wrong with the task, or in our way of going about its execution.

**Uselessness of "Scoldings".** Some people beseech you to "rake" them. It makes them feel they are getting their money's worth, I suppose, but they are deceiving themselves. They use these "rakings" as a soothing syrup for their consciences, and having taken the dose with becoming humility, they feel licensed to go out and commit the same old follies over again, with the vague idea in the back of their heads that another "raking" will somehow atone for all delinquencies. Thus they lull themselves into a desuetude far from innocuous. This sort of thing persists, to some degree in all of us, I suppose, but it is on a plane scarcely higher than the impulse which sends a hen scuttling across the road in front of a passing vehicle, or the inborn urge to leap from a precipice. Failure to enjoy a musical task is presumptive evidence of a bad method of study.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ARTISTIC BY-PRODUCTS OF THE METHOD

#### COLORATURA

T may seem strange to class the execution of trills, runs and ornamental passages under the above heading. For, one might ask, is not the very heart of a method in its provision for a good technique? And what is technique but another name for the execution of scales, arpeggios and ornamental flourishes? But it is to be remembered that everything about singing is strange, for the reason that the instrument is placed in our hands simultaneously with the ability to play upon it. It is natural and normal for people to have fine voices and to sing well with them. True, there are numerous exceptions, numerous enough to disprove the rule one might think, but close observation and study will generally reveal the fact that those who come under the excepted class are using their voices incorrectly, due, generally to the formation of some habit which contravenes the normal action of the organ.

Among other gifts is this one of executing rapidly a succession of tones on different pitches. We all know persons who sing beautifully

**So-called "Natural Voices."** "without a lesson" and who, if they happen to be high sopranos can also "trill like a bird" and execute ornamental passage work fairly well. I would not call them singers, for singing implies a more extended program than the mere execution of scales and trills, and that program, it is safe to say, will never be carried out by these persons. They are generally looked upon as "gifted," but in the light of what I know of them I must confess that "cursed" would be a better word. If they could get over the idea that they are the darlings of a doting Providence, there might be some hope for them, but their friends would never allow that, so I have drifted into the way of considering them undesirables and don't waste time with them.

People without voices on the other hand often make good students and good students will in the fulness of time make good singers. But **Voiceless Pupils.** it is impossible for a singer to remain in the merely *good* class; he must either get better or worse; if better, time and the working out of the method will eventually make him one of the best. People are skeptical about this and one cannot wonder, for have they not seen Lucy X who had a lovely natural

voice take some lessons and lose it? This may have been due to one of a dozen causes, foremost among which would naturally be a bad or antiquated method. But even if the method had been all that a method could be, Lucy's chances of real success would not have been flattering. Not because her fine voice would have been a disadvantage. Quite the contrary; but because she would have found it hard to submit to the conditions necessary for the acquisition of a method of tone production. Why should she learn to do what she can already do, far better than many who have taken lessons?

The right answer to that question must be given and it is doubtful if it lies within the ken of the Lucy's and Charlie's who have "such pretty voices." Unless gifted with superhuman insight and character Lucy and Charlie may be expected to rest content in the undoubted fact that their natural "gift" enables them to sing better without a lesson than some who have had many lessons. Thus they continue to bask in the favor of all such as love pretty voices. And who does not? They are urged by everybody to take lessons and they are always just going to do so, but somehow they put it off until those others, who never had any voices at all, but who worked faithfully, have become good singers. When it is too late to begin they find a perverse pleasure in dreams of what might have been if only they, with their far superior gifts, had put forth the necessary effort. There is a fallacy about that position, too, but it need not be argued here. Suffice it to say that the person with a naturally pretty voice must have very splendid personal qualities to overcome the tendency to "take it out in talent," as some one has happily expressed it. In voice culture, as in everything human, pride goes before destruction. When we take into account that a voice, no matter how pretty, is artistically valueless until developed, it is certainly not unreasonable to regard the gift as one of doubtful value.

Yet under the older methods of study the Charlie's and Lucy's were regarded as the only candidates really qualified for vocal study. Thus it is easy to see why the vocal art lags behind the instrumental. From my own personal standpoint I find the vocally "gifted" all but hopeless. About the only qualification I require is that the prospective pupil shall *not* have a "voice." The great requisite is that they shall do exactly what they are told, without any mental reservations, whatsoever. In due time they will be "hay-foot-straw-footed" into the ranks of singers and they will not be voiceless singers either.

But to return to the question of coloratura. Let us not take the flower of the family but some freckled sister whose voice is so bad

that the neighborhood would rock with laughter at the idea of her taking vocal lessons. Assume that she has been in the "works" of this method two years or so. She will be likely at any moment and without warning to "explode" into the ability to do trills, runs and so forth. This seems incredible until we take into account the fact that our Gretchen has slowly but surely found her way into the paths of vocal rectitude from which the more favored Lucy never happened to stray. Her voice will still be inferior, as it has but two years of correct use to balance the twenty or more of her rival. She will soon outstrip her in this as in all other respects, however, for she has something which the other has not, and never will have—a *method*. Occupation with the consonants as here outlined will add rapidly to the volume and beauty of the organ, overcoming the disadvantage of mis-spent years. It will carry her through all vocal dangers and make her a good, a better, and finally a "best" singer.

### PHRASING

A fine voice, under perfect control, absolute clarity of diction, ease and naturalness of production are values by no means negligible, but the most outstanding, abiding quality of the method lies in the sum of all artistic values, the phrasing. The first condition of good phrasing is that the phrase shall be intelligible. This method not only insures the audition of every word, but of every letter of every word and on terms most favorable to art, viz., without conscious effort. In all that has been said of consonant production the primary object has been tonal quality and volume. Diction is simply an incidental result of the means employed to insure tone production; a by-product.

We have seen how uniform breath pressure is secured for both vowels and consonants, imparting equal carrying power to them all, or as nearly as possible. This alone is a powerful factor in attaining smoothness of phrasing. Taking into account the number of separate and distinct acts concerned in the delivery of the various vowels and consonants making up a phrase, it is self-evident that unless there is some definite, standardized method of rendering them, a noticeable unevenness will surely appear. Consonants slighted in this way have no status from a musical point of view, being merely a series of nasty little noises. A series of big disagreeable noises is likely to ensue when the singer realizes this and tries to even up matters by exaggerating a few. This makes the phrase irregular and "spotty."

The uninterrupted flow of the breath during a phrase will fix the attention and hold it in that state of rapt immobility which we are

accustomed to associate with hypnotism. The quasi-hypnotic effect of perfect vocalism is one of the most astonishing things in nature and undoubtedly harks back to the beginnings of the race. A perfect cantilene will invariably hold an audience spell-bound. It is far more effective than shouting—although it is hard to make singers think so.

### RAPIDITY OF ARTICULATION

This method, by placing the tone very far forward and by enforcing precision in the use of lips, tongue and jaws, eventually gives great lightness and celerity of articulation. Here, again the result is purely incidental. Great rapidity of articulation is frequently called for in phrasing and if ability is lacking the words are sure to be jumbled and the tone muddy, through inexact placement. Even where rapidity is not called for, reserve power will manifest its existence by deftness of articulation and smoothness of utterance.

### CLARITY OF DICTION ON EXTREME PITCHES

One of the most lamentable items in tone production is the unavoidable necessity of broadening the vowels on the top notes. It is a physical limitation which no method can change, of course. The loss of the vowel is compensated by the increased richness of the tone, to be sure, but the blurring of the diction is regrettable. This is overcome in effect by clever consonant enunciation. The constant practice of these on high pitches, incidental to this method, enables us to give them so clearly that the illusion of a pure vowel is easily produced. The audience hears the words so plainly that it is cheated into thinking that a pure vowel has been given. If the vowels were really produced in their full purity the high tones would be ruined. If this is doubted, go to the cat, observe her ways and be wise. Credit for good vowels on high tones can, however, be gained in this way and is thus fairly to be classed as a by-product of the method.

### STYLE

The degree to which an impression of skill in phrasing, interpretation and style may be conveyed by absolutely mechanical means is really amazing. I have been startled by receiving from mere beginners an impression of mature musicianship. These persons, never having sung, and knowing nothing of the traditional bugaboos of the art, had no more sense than to go ahead and do exactly what they were told. The incongruity between their seeming artistry and their actual innocence of artistic intention is often extremely diverting. Opposed

to this situation we often see the fine and mature musician, anxiously and devoutly desiring to give expression to some ideal, who for lack of technical knowledge only produces the effect of a beginner. His "feeling" and "expression" cause a general smile.

### ARTISTIC AVAILABILITY OF THE CHILD VOICE

A very small hand can unlock the doors of art when the key fits exactly. It may shock the reader, should he chance to be steeped in the traditions and superstitions of the vocal art, to know that I have a pupil of four and a half who is quite capable of demonstrating every principle laid down in this book. He takes a high C in a song in the most placid and unconcerned frame of mind imaginable. I hear someone remark, "I don't believe it" or "What a wonderful child," but be assured that it is within the capacity of any child of that age who has not been spoiled in general training. Some phenomenally amiable reader may have murmured, "What a wonderful method," but there is nothing wonderful about it. It is simplicity itself, harking back to primal instincts and so is instantly grasped by the young child. This makes it possible to hope that the day may not be far distant when child voice culture will be universally adopted. Our present ideas on this subject are unspeakably grotesque. Singing as a means of culture and enjoyment is quite as valuable to the child as to the adult and the practise of allowing the child voice to shift for itself during valuable years is a terrible mistake.

This particular youngster enjoys his lesson so much that I feel scarcely older than he when giving it. For example, in singing the last two pages of Woodman's "Open Secret," which goes rushingly to a climax, we both happened one day to be feeling rather exuberant and ran a sort of race to see which could excel in the temperamental exaggeration which the song invites. The accompaniment is quite brilliant and we had an exciting time which he enjoyed so much that when the "Be Glad" was triumphantly exploded on high B flat he burst into peals of laughter *on the same pitch!* It would be hard to find a more perfect example of the true "enjoying attitude." All these pedagogical principles stand out with wonderful clearness in the work of very young pupils. Few words are necessary. The young child will take in every point of your demonstration including delicacy of inflection, accent, expression and articulation. Not the least of these values will be missed by the very young child who has not been spoiled in the general training.

## THE FINER NUANCES OF GREAT SINGING

One more instance I cannot deny myself the pleasure of relating for it brought me close to the heart of the vocal riddle and convinced me again that the rarest graces of the art are, after all, but the by-products of a good method. A young girl of fourteen, a pupil of three years standing, came in one day with a terrible "cold," which was really not a cold at all but physical exhaustion from too much salt-water bathing. The voice was at the lowest possible ebb. In going through some coloratura songs—"Villanelle" and the "Provencal Song"—diaphragm and vocal cords not infrequently failed to come to time, but it never caused her an instant's hesitation. She involuntarily let the tone diminish to a degree of lightness which could be carried with ease and went merrily on her way without interrupting the rhythm for an instant. That the voice was not at its best any one could have seen, but in spite of that and probably because of that, I suddenly realized that in these unpremeditated, accidental nuances I was hearing *in miniature* some of the selfsame effects generally considered the special, personal gift of great singers.

## ARTISTIC AVAILABILITY OF THE VOICE IN LATER LIFE

This whole subject of child voice culture opens a new world of suggestive ideas to the thinking vocal student. The distinctive element in both the cases I have cited was the absolutely perfect psychological conditions due, of course, to the fact that they were children. It is only necessary, therefore, to establish identical conditions with adults in order to realize corresponding results. In fact I have verified this in pupils in the forties, whose voices and minds proved quite as flexible as those of children, once ideal psychological conditions were re-established and safeguarded. The opening of these vast realms of child and adult (middle-age and past middle-age) voice culture may justly be considered a by-product of this method.

## CARRYING QUALITY

Another by-product is what is known in vocalism as "carrying quality." Few people realize the value of a well-delivered consonantal attack in giving carrying quality to a tone. A friend of mine did not when he designed an Echo Organ on the principle of a speaking tube. The idea was that if the voice could carry across the church in a speaking tube, why not the tones of an organ? A dome was made in the top of the Swell Box which was supposed to focus them at one end of the tube, while at the other a funnel shaped affair was arranged in the

ceiling, through which the migratory chords were expected to debouch upon the pates of the astonished habitues of the rear gallery. They may still be listening for the sound that failed, for aught I know. That echo never echoed. There may have been several causes for the failure but the chief contributing one I imagine was the absence of the lingual or labial impulse, backed by diaphragmatic pressure, which differentiates the vocal from the organ tone. This friend learned his lesson so well that he later applied the principle to his choir successfully, so far as the carrying power was concerned, but unsuccessfully as to the phrasing. Not realizing the necessity of following the attack with a firm and free-flowing breath pressure, the effect was jerky and ejaculatory in the extreme.

### MUSICAL QUALITY IN THE SPEAKING VOICE

Another by-product of the method, of enormous practical value in every-day life, and also one having a decisive influence in the application and success of the method itself, is its effect on the speaking voice. All day long, for weal or woe we are all practicing voice culture, for speaking and singing voices are actually one and the same physiologically. Crisp enunciation of consonants, which every student of this method must have, will promptly take effect in the speaking voice, not only enhancing its quality but also bringing to bear a powerful reaction on the singing voice. A bad method of speaking is not only a continual physical aggravation to the organ itself but also entails a constant change in the method of tone production, rendering the singing style artificial and more or less labored.

### ABILITY TO SING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Another comforting quality of the method is the fact that, due to the nature of its routine, it is equally applicable to all languages. Where radically different sounds are called for, it entails only the application of the same principles, although worked out in varying detail, of course. In this regard it may be said that we at least have the melancholy satisfaction of knowing that if we can sing English we can sing anything, for English demands a much more complicated technique than other languages which we are expected to sing familiarly. Certainly this is true of Italian and French and probably of German, also, although some of the guttural sounds in the latter are conducive to throatiness. The student of this method will have no difficulty at all in applying his skill to the special problems of other languages.

**WHOLESALE ELIMINATION OF TECHNICAL PROBLEMS  
CAUSED BY VARYING PITCHES**

Perhaps the greatest distinguishing characteristic of the method is the simplicity of the routine. To the singer trained by this method there are no registers, no different pitches (practically), no worry about a hundred puzzling matters which often plague the singer to the point of distraction. Stated in this bald way I am aware that this seems like claiming the impossible, but a careful re-reading of the preceding pages will convince any one who desires to be convinced, that the facts are as stated.

**SIGHT READING**

The constant and exclusive use of songs called for by the method can scarcely fail to develop fluency in the very important matter of sight reading. This faculty promotes the Enjoying Attitude, indirectly but powerfully. One's enjoyment of a new song is considerably hampered when the first reading is attended with stumblings and stoppings and the tendency to sing over the old songs ad nauseam will be marked. The fires of art are thus more than likely to die down from lack of fresh fuel. This fatal situation is automatically prevented by the routine of the method.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BUSINESS OF A LESSON

OT many years ago a noted magazine printed a vocal lesson by a famous teacher. The lesson made a deep impression on me, which I will try to pass on to the reader. To the best of my memory it ran something like this. "Now, my dear, stand up and bring forth a beautiful, round tone. No, no. Oh, dear no! Try again. Ah yes. That is better, but still not quite perfect. Now, one more trial. Ah, Bravo! Bravo! That was fine, my dear. You have pleased me today. Come again day after tomorrow, my dear." This is a perfect type of the old regime in vocal lessons. If the teacher happened to be masculine he would have thrown in a few sarcasms and rumpled his hair. If he had no hair to rumple he wasn't a vocal teacher. The idea was that the more brutal his manner with the weeping damsel, the greater would be her ultimate triumph. When

**The "Hit or Miss" System.** the stern maestro relented slightly she was overjoyed. The probability is strong that she was overjoyed about the beginning of each new quarter. From two to four years of this nerve-racking program were supposed to fit her for "Grand" Opera. Of course, she was destined for Grand Opera. Nothing less romantic would have been considered by this young lady, although she sometimes evinced a willingness to accept a church position "in the meantime". Her chances for one were about as good as for the other, but it is safe to wager that the "meantime" would have been a long time if she had ever really succeeded in "accepting" a church position. This sort of thing pleased all parties as long as the money lasted, and after that, if she succeeded it was all due to her wonderful maestro. If she failed, which was usual, and almost inevitable, it was the fault of her "voice".

**Wastage of Resources** Such teaching not only invited, but urged the pupil to a mad, headlong wasting of natural resources. Even with the teacher fighting every step of the way, most pupils die of the singing mania. Imagine the situation when both teacher and pupil yield to it unreservedly. That some few lived through it was due solely to the law that when artistic desire is very strong, nature concentrates every energy upon its fulfilment. She pours all resources into one crucible enabling what we like to call "genius" to rise above all obstacles. The trouble with this kind of success in singing

is that the art so nurtured cannot last. The crucible itself—the voice—soon burns out and leaves a mere shell, the most pathetic of ruins. Immediate results are splendid and the fire burns brightly for a time but nature cannot do everything. Close scrutiny will reveal the fact that the seeds of decay are invariably present, only waiting an opportunity, such as a cold or unusual fatigue, to spring up and destroy the organ. Nothing less than a faultless routine of production will prevent the premature weakening of the voice, commonly charged to age.

To show how this can be, let us take a single word as an example. We will take an easy one, not beginning with a consonant and hence rather unfavorable to our method than otherwise, “*world*”, which we will ask the pupil to sing on a high pitch. The singing of this word should consist of six separate and distinct acts, thus: OO—Ah (modified form of Uh)—R—L—D—Uh (neutral finishing tone). This does not make it six times as hard to sing but considerably more than six times as easy. Taken in detail, this way, any one can sing it perfectly. The millionth rendition of the word would not differ in the slightest degree from the first, except for the deftness which comes from practise.

Compare this method with that of the pupil who takes the whole word at a single bite, only concerned with producing a “good tone” which he has already “pictured to himself”. This by the way will be anything but good unless his inspirational pre-vision has happened to include the modification of the rogue vowel. Here we must pause to note an exception.

#### **Good Results from Bad Methods.**

The tone *ought* not to be good, that is, but for one of those peculiar characteristics of the voice which have kept the art of tone production and voice

culture in the hopelessly hit or miss class, down to the present time. If the singer is particularly favored as to voice and temperament and is under the age of twenty-five, the tone may be very lovely, even though incorrectly produced. Above twenty-five, subtle changes will have taken place which will be plainly noted by every one but the singer, if the organ has been used incorrectly. In singing “*world*” on a high pitch the average singer would be concerned,

#### **Loss of Head Tones.**

first of all, for his placement, which will be almost certain to result in over-placement. This will cause a slight strain upon some part of the apparatus, generally a very slight pinching of the throat which will escape notice, the attention being concentrated upon the placement. To the expert ear this will appear as an infinitesimal “grunt” on the lower tones, a more noticeable one in the upper range, generally accompanied by flat in-

tonation and a rapid glissando up to the pitch. All these items will tend to spoil the tone but we will suppose that a really good tone has been produced in spite of obstacles. Next comes the R with its strong tendency to contract the throat on high pitches, unless its production has been critically studied. When attempted under these conditions the pitch thought will almost surely be dimmed, the vocal cords relax and the pitch drop. Then comes the rush upward to regain it for the L which, together with the final D, also offers excellent opportunity for throaty production, especially when slighted, as both nearly always are.

The prevalent way of attacking the problem is to utterly ignore the W R and L, the final D being given with a slight "sputter" more like T than D. In this case the diction would of course be farcical but the tone might be good. Theoretically it might be good but in practice the mental attitude induced by all those consonants in a row, would almost inevitably be such that the tone would turn out to be almost as bad as the diction. The whole apparatus would have been subjected to a strain it was never intended to bear. Other words are subject to the same dangers in a general way and it is easy to see that in ten years the voice will have been subjected to unnecessary and perilous strain, not a few hundred times, but many millions.

**Exercises Necessary  
When Method is Bad.**

We now come to the real reason for exercises in vocal work. By the time the voice has suffered a half hour from this unnoticed but very real strain, resulting from ignorance of the principles of consonant production, it will be decidedly the worse for the experience. This may not appear at once for the reason that it will be thoroughly warmed up to the work, but the next day a certain degree of stiffness will be noted; enough to prevent the rendition of a song with ease. It is therefore necessary to "warm up" on something which contains no consonants. Fifteen minutes of exercising on some vowel will afford relief after which the singing of words may be indulged with comparative impunity for a time. This is the reason some find the singing of exercises so "helpful". The student of this method has no such incentive for exercise practice, as no strain results from a half hour of singing, and unless incorrect use of the speaking voice intervenes, the voice will be ready for use the next morning, without any preliminary warming up.

**Legitimate Use  
of Exercises.**

There is another and more worthy reason for exercises, however, viz., cultivation of resonance and flexibility. No exercise for these purposes has been or can be devised which is not already included in the ordinary

routine I have described. Every possible combination occurs over and over again when directions are followed with exactness. This provides, incidentally, every conceivable variety of tonal enhancement and removes the last excuse for exercise practice with its many harmful tendencies. Even more remarkable is the physical flexibility which permits of rapid execution without any preliminary exercise work whatever.

**The Pseudo-  
Scientific Method.**

After the Hit or Miss system came the pseudo-scientific; a natural enough revulsion from the palpable chicanery of the other. The idea of singing by the use of certain muscles with "names" seemed very reasonable and appealed, for a time, to many sensible and energetic persons. But while the idea was good in theory, the cricoids and thyroids could not seem to pull in the do-re-mi harness, so the purely scientific, or as I have called it, the pseudo-scientific method came quickly to grief.

**The Scientific Method  
with Exercises.**

Then came the really scientific method from which the present system was directly evolved. This method analyzed the action of the various muscles involved in tone production but recognized the fact that such action was not subject to the will. That the apparatus was a law unto itself, in action, but was answerable to the mental state. Thus arose the conscious union of the physical and psychological. The various kinds of resonance were studied and breath control placement, registers and even the effect of some consonants on the follow-

**The Scientific Method  
Without Exercises.**

ing vowels were understood and practiced.\* So far the system is identical with this one in principle. It was based, however, on the old exercise idea and was subject to all its paralyzing effects. The breaking away from this old fetich seems to have been too radical, too anarchistic to be even thought of. So, while all the essential facts of the present system were known it seems never to have occurred to any one to put them directly to work in the singing of a song. By this I do

**Scientific Basis  
No New Thing.**

not mean to say that nobody ever prolonged an M in actual singing. It would be almost impossible to find a singer who could sing a song through without consciously or unconsciously illustrating some of the principles of the system, but not having been able to crystallize the practice into a system, the value of their demonstrations is purely sporadic. Thus every boiling tea-kettle demonstrates the force of steam without in any sense being a steam engine. By the scientific system the training

\* "My Vocal Method" by Franz X. Arens.

of a voice was undertaken in much the same way that an automobile is built. The various items were studied, developed, enhanced in beauty and finally brought to a high polish. This process required some years of strenuous application. It was a tremendous advance over anything which had preceded it, but it left one problem unsolved; the problem of putting it together and making it "go". It was easy enough to produce a few fine tones but quite another to keep these tones while singing a song. One reason for this is that the voice is nowhere near so simple a matter as an automobile. Anything alive and moving is not to be compared to something fixed and lifeless.

**"Placing" Exercises in Theory and Practice.**

To show how this system works in actual practice let us suppose that a voice is deficient in head resonance. "Placing" exercises would

be given. In the very nature of the case these made the placement extreme, to begin with. In time the pupil would learn to produce and recognize this exaggerated placement readily. But by that time there would be danger of the exaggeration becoming permanent, so another "tack" would be made; leaning, again by necessity too far to the mouth resonance side. Then if this were indulged too long there would be danger of getting back to pure mouth resonance, the starting point, so another tack would have to be made, bearing more to the head resonance, side and so on. The idea of all this tacking was that each tack would be less in amplitude until the ideal blend was finally attained. This sounds reasonable and is entirely practicable as a purely theoretical proposition but it demands rather delicate work of both teacher and pupil. It is quite possible for the pupil to become very much bewildered and sometimes nervous in the process. The attempt to increase the proportion of head resonance in the upper tones where it is especially needed would tend to occupy the pupil with the head voice until he actually forgot how to sing his middle tones. The process of getting greater richness into the upper voice would then have to be discontinued until the medium tones were right again. All these evolutions, while clear as crystal to the teacher, are, in the very nature of the case, very mysterious to the pupil. What would be all right one week would seem to be all wrong the next and so on until courage gradually oozed away. Moreover, it must be remembered that in all this tacking the voice was necessarily not placed exactly right and so must have been under considerable strain.

The dissimilarity to automobile manufacture is also notable in the frequent striking variations from the normal in the apparatus itself. The voice is affected by the weather, the health, the mood, the en-

vironment, etc., thus intensifying the bad effect of the whip-sawing process just described. But these are not the worst difficulties encountered by the scientific method. There are violent fluctuations, inexplicable on physical grounds, indicating that the solution must be looked for in the realm of psychology. It was during my researches in this field that I stumbled upon this last link in the vocal process, combining all the elements of perfect singing. Most unexpectedly it has made it possible to dispense altogether with the procedure which I have likened to the construction of an automobile. The link proved to be not so much a link as a whole new chain, if anything about such an ancient institution as the voice can be said to be new.

My attention was attracted by the remarkable tonal influence of the consonants upon the following vowels, only partially developed by the scientific method. The good work which it had accomplished along this line was partially vitiated by its association in practice with the exercise. The value of the consonants in other directions became increasingly apparent upon close study; their almost uncanny quality of enabling one to reach otherwise impossibly high or low pitches, not only with ease and certainty but also with wonderful precision in the vital matters of placement and proportion of resonance; by their strong indirect influence on the diaphragm, both in keeping it active and in rendering its activities effective; by their striking value as stabilizers of the whole vocal process as well as by their ability to impart clearness to the diction and a dramatic, convincing character to the style, at the same time automatically inhibiting all roughness, all exaggerations of style to which the super-perfection of the instrument exposes the singer. Another fact was borne in upon me, viz., that as matters stand little or no attention is given to the technique of consonant production. It seems to have been taken for granted that these "noises" could be safely left to instinct. That was a great mistake. There is always a wrong way to sing a consonant and its capacity for inflicting damage is limitless. The fact that a consonant has been given a thousand times is no proof that the thousand and first will not be disastrous, unless the mechanical features of the process have been definitely understood and consistently absorbed into the routine.

#### **Final Effect of Direct Vowel Training by Exercises.**

Thus it is not at all improbable that a talented young artist might find herself before a critical audience without any precise, definite notion of how to go about the production of the first letter of the first word of her song, if it happened to be a consonant.

Her teacher had always taken it for granted that the ugly sound of the initial consonant would be gotten through with, somehow, and he may be depended upon to manifest some displeasure if it should go wrong at this critical juncture. Showing displeasure has always been one of the prerogatives of pedagogical greatness. It needs no great knowledge of psychology to warn us that if this consonant is ever going wrong this will be the time. In her daily exercises for years she has shunned the T's and G's and CH's, probably and if not, be assured that it is one thing to patter through them in an exercise and something altogether different to face them as they occur in real songs, with real music, before real people who have paid real money to hear a recital. All the disabilities of the exercise militate against her in this critical moment. She suddenly realizes that the thing she is about to do is not the thing, exactly, which she has been doing all these years. Her songs are thickly strewn with consonants, thousands upon thousands of them. These hitherto unnoted, minute enemies will filch away her resonance and cloud her placement. If at all talented she will get the feeling that all is not well; that her voice is losing its brilliancy and flexibility as the recital progresses and will be puzzled to account for it. The peril of this is not so much that something is wrong as that the cause is unknown. It is the presence of unknown danger that we fear in the unreasoning, goose-fleshy way. A foot-fall on the stair in broad day when you are expecting some one, will not start a ripple of the nerves; the same foot-fall at midnight, when you thought you were alone in the house is an entirely different matter. The unknown will give a tremor to the stoutest heart, while the known and understood will not inspire fear, unless there is real cause for fear and even then it need not upset the nerves.

**Safety Devices  
of Our System.**

By the method I have laid down in these pages both kinds of fear are inhibited by removal of causes.

The pupil is never allowed to get past the smallest item without rendering a full and satisfactory account of himself. But if a slip should occur he will know exactly what to do to prevent its repetition and to keep the contagion from spreading. The reason he can do this instantly is that he has had years of practice in this precise thing under the eye of an expert, instead of warbling roulades to the moon. The consonants are so many partitions, dividing the song into air-tight compartments, each containing a vowel. Should anything go wrong with the vowel the area of trouble may be limited to that one "compartment". The next consonant will set matters right with promptness and decisiveness, rendering the vocal craft unsinkable.

Put no faith in the fair exterior of the treacherous vowel. It is at the mercy of wind and wave and liable to be submarine by every passing enemy consonant. By making friends of the consonants, treating them justly, that is to say, the vowels will almost take care of themselves.

But to return to our recitalist. The instant she is convinced that something is going on which she does not understand her nerves will begin to lose steadiness and presently she will find herself in the throes of stage fright. It is not stage fright, properly speaking, but a plain case of inadequate methods of study, the destructiveness of which are not at all mitigated by the fact that both teacher and pupil may have been talented and conscientious.

**Training the Nerves.** In laying out a method of study, regard must always be had to the nerves. They are all-important. There can

be no such thing as a nervous singer. Good nerves are far more important to a singer than a good voice, as the term is used. A voice can always be furbished up to meet musical demands, but I am not so sure about rehabilitation of the nerves. It is the very first business of the lesson to insure conditions which will protect the pupil from nervous shock, from any cause whatever. The very first requisite in a method, a teacher, a lesson, is ability to keep the pupil at all times quiet, serene, even-tempered and happy. Pianists may be turned out on the slave-driving basis, possibly, but a singer would have to be of a remarkably leathery, phlegmatic disposition, to succeed at all under such a system. That mysterious power which is given to some in astonishing degree, of accomplishing things by pure nervous force, has no rightful place in the acquisition of any kind of technique. It is the business of a technique to take away the possibility of such an application of nervous energy. It should be reserved for the strictly musical portion of the art, or held in reserve, to tide the singer over some great and unforeseen emergency.

**Pupil and Teacher.** If a lesson is to meet the highest demand, teacher and pupil must work hand in hand, in full sympathy. The finest "team-work" is essential. Doubtless there are natures which cannot be harmonized in this way, in which case lessons may as well be discontinued. It is only by the prevention of all waste that we can hope for success in anything as difficult as singing. Lack of frankness on either side is fatal. I get along very well with the pupil who says "Do you really mean that?" It is not pleasant to have one's veracity impugned, especially where one's professional integrity is concerned, but it opens the way for an understanding.

There is a school of teaching which seems to look upon the pupil as a target for sarcasm and the butt of bad manners in general. I have taken lessons of that kind. It seemed to be the idea to chop the pupil into fine pieces and deposit him, not too carefully, upon the outside door mat. Getting the pieces together again and taking himself off was entirely the lookout of the pupil. While this method may have its advantages in some cases, I feel sure that it will meet with failure in general. According to my way of thinking the pupil should be treated as a privileged guest. He should not be called upon to exert himself unduly, mentally or physically. The immediate result of stimulation is gratifying but it will eventually cause him to form the habit of progressing by sudden spurts, the bane of all kinds of educational work. Any forcing of the powers of application will inevitably result in a corresponding letting down, during which he will feel discouraged and probably "quit", losing all his investment.

Often pupils are incorrigible in this respect. These enthusiasts are the most dangerous pupils and the next are those who always want to know how they are "getting along" and are continually occupied in an attempt to tell their own fortunes. They waste energy enough in that way to easily spell the difference between success and failure. Others are forever on the point of achieving something worth while but perpetually falling short of the goal by reason of "missing" lessons. Others have already contracted the habit of nervousness in other walks of life and so are practically hopeless from the start. But all these failings are capable of cure or alleviation. The absolutely hopeless one is the pupil of the closed mind, who sulks. The sulking is not less dangerous when masked by an affable manner. Insincerity or lack of frankness acquired by faulty education or mistaken ideals of life is a great stumbling-block. Its correction is problematical and at best it puts an extra strain upon the teacher.

At the first sign of weariness or anxiety the wise teacher will take the hint and analyze the difficulty still further or change the work entirely. The work should be constantly varied anyhow, on principle. The repetition of a song during a lesson is exceedingly dangerous. Repetition calls for a far more exacting set of conditions and will certainly result in an inferior performance unless strain is added. Exception may be noted where the habit of repeating is chronic. Here the pupil will unconsciously reserve his best effort for the second rendition. Once this habit is formed—and it will form speedily—it will be practically impossible for him to break it when he is before an audience.

The only chance for such a singer to shine would be to have everything encored.

**Relentless Outworking of Deep Principles.**

Fanciful, you say? Fine-spun theories? Well enough to put in books but of no practical importance in my small affairs?

Thus speaks the spirit of the "Hit or Miss" method. The laws of psychology are no more to be abrogated by looking the other way than are those which make fire burn or water drown you. These great laws, which I have pointed out, will take effect to some degree before the first lesson is over and you could note their action if you were trained in observing pedagogical values. Nature's prodigality in giving vocalists a super-instrument makes it possible to ignore them for a few years but that only renders the final debacle more pitiable. Such singers are like newly married people, who, secure (?) in their great fund of affection, imagine that they have no need of the small manners, courtesies and formalities which lubricate the wheels of social life. Athletes have much in common with singers. They, too, are so dazzled by the superfluity of energy which Nature gives them in early youth that they imagine it will keep on forever. They make it their business to exhaust these forces, to make "records", rather than to study their conservation. Thus it happens that most athletes, as well as most singers are "done" at thirty-three.

**Effect of Stimulation.**

The pupil should never be stimulated to his "best" during a lesson. He should rather be put in the way of striking an average speed or mean degree of effort which he can safely keep up, year after year, for a life-time. The enjoying attitude may be preserved for a life-time, too, by a judicious selection of songs. The combination of these two elements; a steady, calm advance along safe pedagogical lines and avoidance of anything tending to mar the enjoying attitude, will develop artists of the highest type and vastly increase their number. It will also furnish the material for appreciative audiences, without which the artist cannot do his best work.

Again, by insisting upon the principle that one's artistic efforts are primarily for his own pleasure and enlightenment we shall have millions of art lovers, who, even though they have not been able to continue their studies to the point of becoming artists, will form a vast army interested in, and striving for, everything calculated to advance the cause of art. As the case stands, the voice is absolutely neglected until maturity, and a beginning is made during the particu-

lar period in which both male and female of the species are at the lowest point of receptivity: from twenty to twenty five. From the first moment of his career such a student becomes the marked prey of friends who, having always been skeptical, demand instant proof of a "voice" whenever "two or three are gathered together". Thus the pupil is put on exhibition before he has opportunity to learn anything at all of the work. The teacher also is on trial and is expected to furnish convincing proof of the efficacy of his methods. The only way these ends can be achieved is by *forcing*, and so customary is this abominable practice in co-ordinate branches of educational work that it not only fails to arouse criticism but is even applauded. The more strenuous the driving of the teacher, the more frantic the struggles of the pupil, the sooner she sings in public, the greater is her success in the minds of these friends.

The reaction from all this pushing is prompt and sure. In from five to ten years from her first lesson the voice has reached a point where it demands greater and ever greater forcing. Simultaneously comes the mental reaction from this forcible feeding. Complete disillusionment ensues at thirty and this "singer" joins the ever-swelling ranks of singers who no longer sing. Then comes the period in which she finds a certain joy in an assumption of superiority to younger candidates and in regaling them with Ancient Mariner tales of the mysterious illness or other convenient scapegoat (Diphtheria, Tonsils, etc.) which accounts for her too early retirement. But we are not to infer from her inability to sing that she does not know all about singing! Probably there is no such thing as absolute waste in the world. They tell us that when our houses burn down there is but a change of form into heat, ashes and so forth, but the very nearest approximation to absolute waste certainly is the career of the average singer. It seems rather hard but it is true that by the very terms of his gift the singer must be perfect and marvellous or a hopeless failure.

#### **Inversion of Pedagogical Values.**

How it is in other lines of work I do not know, though I have my suspicions, but in the domain of vocal work there is a general misconception amounting, practically, to an inversion of pedagogical values. From the cradle, our heads are filled with loose talk about "Practice making perfect" (it often renders us incredibly imperfect); of there being "No true excellence without great labor" (probably, in the manufacture of clothespins); of Concentration, meaning thereby some peculiarly obnoxious form of nervous or mental strain; of Relaxation, while in the preceding and following breaths they are raving of the difficulties en-

countered and of the gigantic struggles we must undergo before we have reached the dizzy heights to which they have, presumably, attained.

**Discarding the "Hard Work" Idea.** The "efforts" of the pupil are over when he removes his thumb from the studio bell. I

"really mean that" and if the pupil will really

believe it he can buy himself a nice little runabout with the money it will save him. It is only necessary that the pupil have ambition and intelligence enough to place the foot marked 2 on the square in the floor marked 2 and the foot marked 1 on the square marked 1 and refrain from placing both feet on 2 or a half a foot on 2. It is as plain as plain can be that most of us have been so bullied by teachers of all kinds that it is practically impossible to comply with a simple request like putting the foot marked 2 on the square marked 2. So far are we removed from the enjoying attitude in matters of study that we are certain there must be some catch about it or some trap. It is this heritage from bad teachers and bad methods in collateral lines that makes most of the difficulty in teaching voice culture.

Ask these poor victims to drop the jaw, which any child could do at the first trial, and they will respond by wrinkling the forehead, assuming an air of panting eagerness to please, and finally end by contracting muscles not at all involved, and then straining others to overcome the effect of these. At last they contrive to get the mouth open. The eyes will often show a state of utter panic and fear. The first month must often be given to correcting the outward evidences of former torturings, inflicted in the name of education. Having finally mastered the action, should the teacher ask if they saw that it was right, the answer will very likely be that it seemed "better." The convolutions and ramifications of trouble caused by inexact thinking and faulty training are really incredible. It is the overcoming of these which frequently forms the chief business of a lesson.

**Faults of Character.** Faults of character are baffling in the extreme. Insincerity, lack of frankness, distrust, unsteadiness, timidity, over or under self-centralization, jealousy, lack of courage, over-sensitiveness and so on must all be corrected before the best results are obtainable. The business of a lesson often takes us far, far away from voice culture. Some faults it is necessary to correct before the method can be grasped; others will correct themselves as a natural consequence of correct singing. The spiritual value of vocal work is far greater than we think.

As for practice, as we understand the word, none is required for the first two years, except such as the pupil may undertake for his

own amusement. As for "true excellence" I will show him something far more interesting: true beauty; but only on condition that he will refrain from all "labor". The moment I see signs of "concentration", as commonly practiced, I will tell him a story; preferably a funny one. As for relaxation, as the word is used by writers on voice culture, I feel that the expression is unfortunate. Relaxation implies a reserve of power which cannot be gained without preparatory action. The attempt to relax before force has been generated is doomed to failure. It is like expecting a clock to "go" before it is wound up. I am speaking, not of a definite process like relaxing the diaphragm, but of relaxation as a general term used to guide the pupil to a correct method of tone production. The fine singer directs the beginner to relax because when he, himself, sings he experiences a feeling of relaxation. This "feeling" is perfectly correct but to expect any one to sing by such a vague method would be about as sensible as to expect him to get hold of a million dollars by feeling the way the speaker felt when *he* got a million dollars.

**The Singer Always  
a Student.**

One very special condition differentiates the majority of singing pupils from all other students.

This is the fact that by reason of indulgence in the "Mania" their perceptions, including that of hearing, are only partially effective at first. It is the special business of a lesson, therefore, to make good this weakness. The teacher must be eyes and ears for the pupil for many months and it is doubtful if the singer is ever to be trusted in these matters for very long at a time. This explains how so many great singers acquire the most glaring vocal faults; faults which glare all the more fiercely in contrast to their great artistic ability. They become so great, so popular, that none, not even the awesome newspaper critics, dare molest them and so they are utterly unaware of these barnacles, which clog the efforts of their later years. We all "benevolently" assume that the *age* of the artist is at fault. I shudder to think what would happen if some one really blurted out the truth. That the famous Madame, with all her fame and physique was singing like a school-girl or that Mr. So-and-So was doing things which would disgrace a pupil of six months standing. Of course the idea is preposterous but think what a boon it would be to all concerned if the needed correction, usually a very simple one, could be made and these shadowy spectres of a glorious past should suddenly begin to scintillate again before our eyes. But rest assured that it will never happen; at least not while tone production is left to the tender mercies of superstition, witchcraft and luck.

**A Lesson by This System.** A lesson by this method has little to recommend it to the popular imagination. The good old picturesque features of the Hit or Miss method are wholly wanting. And how we do love that sort of thing! The numbing terror of mysterious ills is not more thralling than the rosy, if irrational, expectation of mysterious good. How we love the stately Madame and the rumpled Signor! And who could possibly fail to react to the sobbing of their weeping victim, so soon to find her high C in her right shoe, presumably by weeping into it, as Patti, or somebody, did once. Verily, Barnum was the great psychologist!

A lesson by this method has none of the glamour of the scientific method. How we love the distinguished surgeon with his shining implements! What a privilege to be the object of his expensive attentions after being bluntly told by the family doctor that all we need is to eat less and exercise more! And the singing scientist! What a wonder he is! He knows so much and tells it so well and it is all so wonderful that you are sure it is your own fault that you don't sing better than you do. This idea, by the way, seems to be the one thing all methods have in common; the idea of loading any possible failure upon the shoulders of the pupil.

A lesson by this method lacks not only the above showy features but is positively destitute of any appearance of reasonableness. It lacks probability. How on earth could any one get something for nothing that way? It lacks plausibility. It looks very much like another of those "fake" methods. It taxes the credulity to the breaking point. It even denies the much lauded "will to victory" by insisting upon neutrality of thought and feeling. It denies the thrill of struggle; the joy of putting forth one's strength. In fact, it has but one merit. It *works!* It works every time, in every case; at all ages; in all conditions of health which permit of singing at all, and its working is invariably in the nature of spotless perfection.

## CHAPTER X.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE SYSTEM BY TEACHERS.



PUPILS naturally group themselves into two classes, which we will designate as Class A and Class B. Class A consists of those who have not studied deeply and are consequently unprejudiced as to method. They offer little resistance to our way of doing things and are quite as ready to center attention upon consonants as upon vowels. This makes a world of difference. With them we may safely invoke the great power of music itself, from the very beginning. A song may be taken and fully enjoyed as soon as the principle of breath control is mastered. The teacher may sing a part of the phrase,—two or three words will be enough, or perhaps only one at a time,—followed immediately by the pupil. He should be encouraged to imitate the various acts which produce the musical result rather than the result itself. Certain salient points may be commented upon and a correction made here or there but subtle distinctions should be deferred until the pupil is well advanced.

**Breathing** Of the very first importance is the breathing, which must invariably follow the definite plan outlined in Chapter Three. Insist particularly upon the hissing sound at the lips during inhalation. No lapses in the matter are to be tolerated. The pupil's eye must be trained to observe with accuracy the teacher's demonstrations. Some are so clever about this that very few words are necessary. Others are so slow that act and word together seem to produce no impression at all. But it will not do to jump to the conclusion that because they are slow in this they will be slow in everything. Mental powers have developed from very small beginnings and the best of us drop back occasionally to the mud-turtle stage, in certain things. I have known pupils who seemed almost imbecile in this respect, to grapple with the fine distinctions of the art in a most satisfactory and even brilliant manner.

Eventually all pupils, quick or slow, will have to thoroughly master every individual item of the method as described in the rules laid down for Class B, but for the first few months the chief impression left in their minds should be musical. They should go away from a lesson thinking about the songs and how "pretty" they were, rather than about the method. This should in all cases be applied with great

tactfulness and flexibility, testing the capacity of the teacher more severely than might be imagined. In the meantime shoals of songs, a new one at each lesson, will keep them interested and the tri-weekly vocal lesson will come to be regarded as a fixed institution. It need never be anything but play for them.

Making the most of every favorable opening, the teacher will clinch the fundamental features of the method, gradually polishing up the finer distinctions from month to month and year to year. This will keep both pupil and teacher happily occupied for just as many years as they are disposed to continue. It is astonishing how interesting such a course becomes. The voice will be constantly taking on new beauties and the life be steadily enriched by the inexhaustable treasures of our beloved art. Incidentally, the easy charm and gracefulness of manner which characterize the utterly inexperienced will be preserved.

The Class B pupil has usually long since parted with whatever naturalness of manner he may have originally possessed, so our task is to that extent simpler. The musical motive, so powerful a factor in the treatment of Class A is now a thing of danger, a constant menace. Class B pupils are nearly always in the advanced stages of singing mania. Any considerable enjoyment of the musical content of a song is prohibited until they have become genuinely interested in the routine we are prescribing for them. Yet I would never resort to an exercise, although this method is rich in exercise possibilities. The destructiveness of the mania may be held in check by a vigorous insistence upon each and every item of the routine. After having been "brought up, standing" several times in the rendition of a single word for a few lessons the pupil will, little by little, give over-indulgence in the wild plungings which always characterize victims of the mania. During this period the music of the song must be "killed" for him. It will gradually come to life again as the violence of his struggles diminishes and he will find an entirely new kind of "joy" in singing. The great trouble, or at least one of the great troubles with the exercise, is that it kills the music in the pupil as dead as the traditional "door nail."

**Use of Songs.** A great deal of care should be given to the selection of songs. Song writers are of two kinds; those who know all about the vocal style and those who know nothing about it. Any singer who undertakes a song by one of the latter is incurring a fearful and needless risk and is more than likely to come to grief, no matter how careful he may be or how excellent the song, from a purely musical point of view. Common sense would suggest the choice of songs of moderate range for the first few months, although the unspoiled lyric

voice will sing a high C quite as readily and safely as any note in the range. I will indicate a few which seem to me particularly well adapted for all voices during this critical period.

A good one to start with is Hawley's "Peace". For the Class A pupil I would play the charming prelude with care and expression. It will quiet the nerves and prevent undue self-consciousness. Enjoy this with the pupil, perhaps commenting on the lovely effect in the fifth and sixth measures. There is nothing like enjoyment of the *same* things in music to harmonize two souls and there is emphatic need for such harmony if good work is to be done. For the Class B pupil I would omit the prelude and play the accompaniment with one finger and an occasional chord, thus serving notice that the method is more important than the song, for the time.

Execute the first word, "Tis" as follows:

1. Take breath (not too much).
2. Place tongue-tip firmly at base of upper front teeth.
3. Press with diaphragm (relaxing pressure, only), insuring good breath supply and at the exact point where needed in the attack of the vowel.
4. Think pitch clearly.
5. Release breath, simultaneously bringing the vocal cords into action.
6. Drop jaw to angle appropriate for the vowel I (see "Rogue" vowels).
7. Prolong this comfortably and then bring teeth quickly together, keeping lips clear of them, thus making sure of a resonant Z. This looks rather formidable, but it can be done in half the time it takes to tell it and you will have no difficulty in covering the essential points the **Tonal Rainbow Chasing** first time trying. Do not criticize the tone of the vowel too severely. We learn to sing by definite acts, performed according to a prescribed routine, rather than by endeavoring to study and improve the tone, as such. There is nothing so demoralizing as the never-ending quest for fine tones in which we are all tempted to indulge.

**Nervous Pupils.** With nervous pupils it is best not to ask for the repetition of an attempt during the first lesson as they are likely to become self-conscious and confused, thus wasting the lesson. It is a good rule to make whatever remarks are necessary in the way of correction and then pass on to the next word. High-strung pupils

generally have a certain ability all their own. They will keep suggestions in the mind for an indefinite period and suddenly astonish the teacher, some fine day, by applying them with great skill. In the meantime they give an impression of stupidity and even of obstinacy. They often possess a touch of real genius, though, and while impatient of methodical, plodding work and terribly hard to have patience with, will sometimes arrive at brilliant execution without apparently having mastered the various technical details. Of course they have learned, in precisely the same way as the others, except that the various impressions have lain dormant and then by some mysterious process have suddenly become active.

"Not" may be treated in the same fashion and so on, through the song. "Striving" illustrates our system favorably.

1. The S is prolonged until the sense of automatic breath-flow is well established, when it is suddenly stopped by placing the tongue squarely across the exit, thus preparing for the

2. T. In doing this the breath pressure must not be lessened in the slightest degree.

3. Suddenly releasing the column of compressed air by removing the tongue-tip, we get a good sharp explosion which will be identified instantly by the remotest auditor. Note that while the pressure is not lessened it must not be increased, either, or it will be disproportionately loud.

4. Instantly, without the interpellation of any vowel sound (a frequent fault), the tip of the tongue is set in vibration, producing the R.

5. Note the splendid co-resonance of the head which this insures. It is all we need for the vowel I. The best way to make sure of a fine vowel is to think of it as merely a prolongation of the R only with a wider jaw and a quiet tongue.

6. Cease vibrating tongue-tip and drop jaw slowly, or at least deliberately and flexibly to form the I, taking great care not to "spill" any resonance in so doing.

7. Close mouth quickly for the V. Singers invariably slight this consonant, ignoring its great value as a resonator, to say nothing of its importance in the matter of enunciation. Leave plenty of room between the lips for the tone to get through. If this is neglected the tone will be smothered and the succeeding vowel fatally gutturalized. The physical effect, too, will be extremely trying to the apparatus.

8. Drop jaw for the (rogue) vowel I, retaining all the resonance accumulated by the V.

9. NG is a magnificent resonator and its production is exceedingly simple and safe. Refer to the Tone-Chart frequently for this and follow directions closely; otherwise the temptation to "strangle" it will be irresistible.

10. The U (neutral-tone finish) must not be allowed to enter the mouth noticeably or the effect will be farcical. It is only necessary to drop the back of the tongue very slightly. Keep the tone full; a vanish would take away from the dramatic force of the word. Every word in the song should be executed in this same painstaking way, always remembering to open the mouth wide for the high pitches, regardless of the vowel.

Discretion will have to be used in the matter of insistence upon exactness of execution, for a long time. Usually the older pupils, those with the "ruined" voices are delighted with the routine and find plenty of pleasurable excitement in observing the slow but steady rehabilitation of their shattered organs. But some will be restive and nervous, and the only hope of saving them is to treat them somewhat after the fashion outlined for Class A. As time goes on and we get a more secure hold on them, a more rigid application may be realized. As the pupil advances from year to year he becomes more and more adept in these matters and the voice finally becomes so responsive that the slightest departure from the straight and narrow path will instantly be noted by even the casual listener. The tonal polish and delicacy of control which come after long use of the method in this way are as remarkable as the improvement in volume of tone and clearness of diction. Improvement in tone quality is also realized to an incredible degree; in some cases at the very beginning, but more often it requires the ear of an expert to even distinguish right from wrong.

"By Moonlight" of Hadley's is well worth study, if for no other reason than for the opportunity it offers for revelling in M's and N's. Moonlight and Noonlight also illustrate the use of the tonal-hyphen outside its special field of word-connection. The N is separated from the L by a very, very short tonal hyphen: a swift flip of the tongue-tip downward after the N, returning as quickly to its place but pointed, of course, for the L which follows.

Mac Fadyen's "Cradle Song" has a quietly flowing melody which is most favorable to the attitude of mind we require for effective

work. Give the "hard-worked" student a moment's rest while you entertain him with the charming little interlude between the stanzas. If he is young enough you might tell him that the trills are the "stars". I did this with my four-year old pupil, to his manifest edification. Later, when he was singing it for "company," I asked him to tell them what the interlude meant. He replied with the solemnity possible only to his years and in the sweetest of baby-tones, "'Bout the Stars" and I can assure you that we were all very near "The Stars" for a moment. But too much of that sort of thing would not be good for him, perhaps.—Try him with John Barnes Wells' "A Little Rock", "The Lightning Bug" or the "Crow's Egg" and his laugh will add a year to your life. But to return to the Cradle Song. The very first

**Effect of Careless Production.** word, "Slumber" will bear watching. There will be a tendency to slight the S and hurry over the L. Thus positive diaphragmatic action does not take effect until the vowel, and the chances of a bad start, which nearly always means a bad finish, are strong. When sung in this way the S means absolutely nothing and has no clear character or definite standing in the phrase. It is just a "nasty little noise".

The effect of a hurried L is even worse. Lack of breath-pressure will place the tone too far "back" making it "muddy". The tongue will get in the way of the tone, through lack of properly pointing the tip, checking the egress of even such tone as may have been produced. This bad effect will almost certainly be intensified by failure to open the mouth. Most singers seem to be entirely innocent of anything remotely resembling an idea regarding the production of an L. The information that it should be produced with the mouth open is generally in the nature of last minute news to them; the kind they print in red ink in "Extras". But lack of information will not prevent an uncomfortable feeling in the throat, even if he is far gone in the mania, and he will resolve (subconsciously, of course) to do something about it. This will probably take the form of a desperate diaphragmatic "drive" at the unfortunate vowel, the one thing it does not require and indeed is utterly unable to stand up against. Not being on guard against the rogue vowel U he may be depended upon to walk straight into its trap also, which will increase his dissatisfaction, and he will redouble his effort at the diaphragm, which will probably resent the injustice by "wobbling". And we are not half way through the first word of the song yet! Enough vocal sins have been committed by this typical singer to ruin Mr. Mac Fadyen's pretty song already, and we will not follow the messy details of his subsequent struggles.

All this may be avoided by simply turning on the breath generously for the S, thus giving it a definite standing in the musical "community". While not exactly a thing of beauty, it has significance and its presence in the phrase is not only justifiable but indispensable. Moreover, it gives the singer time to think his pitch and to consider what he is going to do about the L; viz., point the tongue and open the mouth. The L will come clearly with its ethereal, liquid quality and will color the vowel attractively. In fact there will be nothing much to "do" about the vowel at all, except to remember that it is a rogue, which makes it even easier than a pure vowel. The actual effort involved consists in lowering the tongue-tip and dropping the jaw very slightly. The mere closing of the lips (decidedly) will, without other action, result in a perfect M, king of resonators. Separate them suddenly and a clean "telling" B will appear, entirely free from any guttural suggestion. By its nature it guarantees ample mouth resonance for the succeeding vowel, which is very desirable in this case, as the M is so rich in head resonance that there is always danger of an undue preponderance of head resonance in the vowel which follows it.

Drop the jaw for the vowel, closing it again suddenly for the R which cannot possibly go wrong. Then comes the neutral tone finish, which is simply a vanish without the diminuendo. Having taken the trouble to look after these more or less sordid details one has ample leisure to revel in the beauty of the free-flowing and daintily colored vowels, a pleasure which may be shared with the auditor. The singer should enjoy the tone as a spectator, only. In addition, he will have, of course, the thrill of being the actual, physical, vibrating medium of tonal expression and the solid satisfaction attending the accomplishment of a difficult task. With such a strong start we may feel sure that the song will proceed without mishap.

**Songs as Nerve Stabilizers.** The foregoing will give a fair idea of the application of the method. The most important item is the constant changing of songs. Every lesson should be "freshened up" by at least one new song. The new song has the effect of keeping the pupil from undue concentration, with its train of ills. He is too busy reading the notes to worry much about this or that detail of execution. Merely as a By-Product he will attain clever musicianship and fluency in sight reading. So important do I consider this purely musical factor that if, for any reason, it became necessary to linger, tediously, on one part of a song, as in this word, slumber, I would leave the song unfinished and take up another: preferably of contrasting style. The singer may be kept in close contact

with this mighty force, except, of course, while undergoing the mania cure. Even then, the mere material fact of the open song before him preserves a tenuous relationship. The severing of this silken thread by an exercise I consider dangerous in the extreme. The super-musical ones may survive, as did Porpora's model Sunday School scholar but very few of them are musical enough for that. In fact it may be doubted if any considerable number of them are what could be called really musical, at all, in the beginning. But whether musical or not, it can do no harm to feed the divine spark and make the most of the pupil's artistic capabilities.

Del Riego's "Greatest Wish in the World" furnishes a good contrast to the foregoing. Although bright and quick it must be taken slowly, of course, and the constant interruptions will chop up the song more or less, but still, considerable atmosphere will remain. Get a good start at the first word. Insist on a good, clean rendering of the TH, neither sliding up to the pitch (scooping) nor prefacing it with a cloudy M or N, both common faults. TH is a splendid placer and resonator and unless forced will give a distinctive and beautiful coloring to the vowel. Make the pupil place the M squarely on the pitch and allow no sagging of the diaphragm between it and the preceding R. In "Wishes that go floating", prolong the W (OO) and allow no diminution of breath-pressure anywhere in the phrase. Be especially careful at the joining of the words. Make the final S (Z) in "Wishes" join closely to the TH in "That", with just the faintest whiff of a tonal hyphen between them. The final T in "That" must come with a decided explosion and the G in "Go" must be definitely packed and positively exploded. All tone must definitely cease while a good, hearty F is deliberately executed. It may appear that these mere **Diction.** noises will be too strong when so produced but that is a mistake. Unless definitely given they will not carry past the first few seats in an auditorium. Even there they will not be convincing.

This is one of the "dead" lines that separates the professional from the amateur. The artist presents clearly the phrase, "that go floating through our minds" while the amateur only *thinks* he is singing these words. What the audience really hears is something like: "(N) a' ko 'loaki 'rough ou' min'". Those fortunate enough to have seats in the front row may be able to detect a more or less edifying effect of sputterings where the consonants should be if the singer is particularly conscientious about his "diction". In time the consonants may be given with incredible speed and accuracy but in the learning stage we are

only concerned with correctness of technique in execution. "There once was a wish" etc. calls for smooth and rapid phrasing, any musical person would realize that intuitively, but how to attain it is a large question. No amount of wishing or thinking will make this particular wish come true. The solution lies in correct execution of the consonants and continuous breath pressure. The conventional practice of centering on the vowels and gliding lightly over the consonants results in something like this: "A- ooUH -ooUH -ooUH -ooI" and so on. It has not even the merit of smoothness as the continual impinging of the breath against the unprotected vowels gives the impression of a very unmusical succession of slight bumpings.

Another light song, especially good for high sopranos is "That's the World in June" by Spross. If sung in the high key the lips, or more accurately, the mouth-corners must be drawn back from high B flat up, or the tone will be smothered. That is, the overtones will be absorbed and the tonal result will be either weak and lifeless or what is more likely, loud and harsh through forcing. The same burying effect takes place throughout the range unless the lips are kept well away from the teeth; the tendency to pull the lower lip up over the teeth is particularly strong in pulling back the mouth corners for the extreme high notes. This pulling back of the lips is not necessary for the adult male voice.

**The Tongue on High Pitches.** Before leaving this subject of extreme high tones it is to be noted that the tongue is sometimes so large or long that it gets in the way of these rapid vibrations, smothering the tone and tempting one to gain brilliancy by forcing. It may be easily corrected by drawing back the tip slightly, curling it under the rest of the tongue. In rendering the high C which is here preceded by an ascending scale, the tendency to intensify **Coloratura.** the breath-pressure must be resisted at all hazards. Look for this to happen about three notes before the C. The only cure is to stop short. If not too bad it may be tried again but if the trouble persists, give it up for the time, and do not return to that particular passage until the voice is under better control. It is generally the old singers who get into this difficulty. Beginners don't "know enough" to do it wrong in the first place. Success in the end is sure but it can only come by the gradual development of the whole apparatus as outlined in former chapters. Direct effort in such a case is almost sure to result disastrously as the pupil will become increasingly nervous about it, in all probability.

**The Dramatic Style.** Modern dramatic songs are an especially favorable medium for study. While they should never be attempted in public by lyric voices, all voices may be greatly benefitted by studying them. Such an one is Kramer's "The Last Hour." The possibilities of a dramatic rendering, by a skillful handling of the consonants, is notable. The singer who would essay this song must be an actress in every essential except actual physical movement. She must also be a musician, for a thorough grasp of the accompaniment in its relation to the text and to the vocal part is absolutely necessary to an adequate conception of the song. Her grasp of the poem, too, must be strong. No mere "Tra-La-La" attitude will suffice. She must know words in all their subtle nuances and have a vital apprehension of the deeper significance of life's experiences and be capable of accurately estimating their emotional reactions. Also she must have a sufficiency of personal magnetism to convey these impressions to the auditor.

But these qualities, great as they are, will be of no value at all; will, in fact, bring her into ridicule unless she preserves at all times the perfect vocal poise and the high standard of tonal beauty for which the Italian school is justly famous. In other words she must preserve the tonal perfection which goes so readily with the "Tra-La-La" mental attitude while presenting powerfully the deep and subtle gradations of thought and emotion which characterize the moods of the poet and philosopher. It is her problem to be a deep thinker without allowing either face or tone to become "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

The first part of the song is pure recitative, introducing the hardest problem in tone production, viz., a rapid succession of words demanding impressive delivery, *upon a single pitch*. The singer will have need of all her skill to avoid the mouthings and tonal bumpings which mar the efforts of those who seem content to blurt out the words in almost any fashion. Apparently they think that if they only "feel" strongly enough the audience will overlook harshness of tone. The fundamental requirement is to keep the diaphragm up to its highest efficiency, despite consonantal interruptions and rapid changes in vowel shaping. The solution is, as usual, found in the treatment of the consonants, not neglecting, of course, the equally important matter of vowel shaping. For instance, the careful delivery of the initial S in "Suppose Beloved" will promote a lively action of the diaphragm throughout the phrase, while a firm, virile rendering of the final D will leave it in good condition to start the next phrase. It will also give the auditor the impression that more is coming and so keep up his interest.

Whatever happens, the wits of the listener must never be allowed to wander from the meaning of the words, even for a moment. His eye must never be allowed to take on that vacant look. One means must be denied though; the temptation to rush on mumblyingly with the text or on the other hand to linger absurdly at the expense of that down-trodden mortal, the accompanist. The singer is, of course, the "boss" and may do what he likes but he will be very unwise if he interferes in any way with the various musical effects in the accompaniment. It is in an altruistic spirit of "give and take" that singer and accompanist must work together. The rights of the accompanist must be insisted on, even if he is only an employee, with duties rather vaguely defined as having something in general to do with being "at the piano". Accompanying the text here, for instance, is a marked triplet rhythm well designed to heighten its effect. If the tempo lags unduly, while the singer is exploiting some tonal flourish, they will be ineffective and the corner stone of the whole musical fabric will crumble. This does not mean that the pianist may not linger a bit here or hasten a trifle there, provided that the outstanding features of the composition are not distorted.

**Exaggerations of Style.** The meaning—the *whole* meaning of the song must be kept constantly in view. Neglect of this broader outlook will ruin the effect of any song, no matter how great the individual merits of singer and pianist. In a song recital the effect is simply deadly. Many an otherwise deserving vocalist has been criticised for monotony of style, when as a matter of fact he indulged in too much style. He lingers so long and deliciously on his nuances—"linked sweetness long drawn out"—or rages so exhaustingly in his dramatic climaxes—"sound and fury, signifying nothing"—that the auditor is soon worn out and ceases to react to these phenomena. The second part of the song has two melodies proceeding simultaneously and of equal beauty, offering an excellent opportunity to cultivate the "give and take" spirit. A good general rule in the interpretation of this kind of song is to "get on with your story". Not perfunctorily, to be sure, for every note and word must *say* something.

"A Nocturne", also by Kramer, is practically all recitative, with an elaborate piano part, abounding in complicated rhythms. A typical test comes in the phrase—"The whisp'ring leaves are calling to the night" which must be delivered rapidly, yet with perfect smoothness. This may be achieved by clinging closely to the consonants as a vocal basis, particularly the singing ones, the "vocals". The temptation to

ignore them and over-emphasize the vowels is very strong in this type of song. If indulged it gives a very uneven effect without even achieving clarity of diction. A difficulty which will recur frequently but which may not be referred to again, for lack of space, arises with the words "is come". A sudden climax falls on the word "come", rendered by a sudden upward leap in the melody. The conventional manner of singers in approaching such a climax suggests the preparations of a circus performer who is about to leap over thirteen elephants. We have all been "brought up" on the idea that the hard C (K) will close the throat and place the tone "back". If we admit the correctness of the assumption, about the only solution would assuredly lie in the adoption of circus methods. The idea seems to have been that if we could once succeed in leaping across the K without touching it we would have plain sailing when it came to the vowel. What became of the final M never worried us at all; it was simply among the "missing".

How utterly different is the solution offered by our System! In the first place we utterly deny the existence of a single "elephant", much less thirteen, and would not feel called upon to pay particular attention to the difficulty were it not that we know that a hallucination of "elephants" exists in practically all human brains, including, of course, our own, with the accompanying instinctive "urge" to jump over them. We neutralize this tendency by taking particular pains to follow the details of the system with special punctiliousness. It is a notable characteristic of this method that its application does not call for "discretion." Advanced and mature artistry will manifest its skill in the ability to follow all directions with incomparably greater precision but beyond that nothing. Tonal beauty and control will take care of themselves. During the instant of tonal stoppage required for the C(ome), while the vocal cords are out of action and the back of the tongue is being placed in position, give the pitch a clear, definite thought. This places the cords in the exact position they are to occupy and nothing remains to be done except to throw them into action by turning on the breath; that is by dropping the back of the tongue. Instantly we have achieved the grand climax with a perfect tone and never the shadow of an "elephant" has been encountered on the way.

Any one who likes this song will probably take kindly to Mac-Fadyen's less subtle, but intensely dramatic "Inter Nos". Word connection and word finishing are salient features in its execution. If directions are closely followed the audience will hear "I did not know that heav'n was heav'n, until thy heart touched mine," at the be-

ginning. If not they will have to feed their imaginations on "I di' nok know ak 'emn wa' 'emn, until thy 'eartouched mine" etc.

Another song which should be studied in this connection is Vernon Spencer's "Out there the Dune". In this little (?) song of twenty-three measures we have portrayed with great vividness the desolate-ness of the place, the pounding of the storm, the ticking of a clock, the tragic yearning for companionship and subsequent despair, the un-pitying immensity of sea and sky. Mac Fadyen's "Love is the Wind" by contrast deals with but a single phase of a single emotion—almost a snapshot of it, but the fiery rush of the musical setting is very inspiring.

**Choosing Songs for Beginners.** The dramatic song is not to be recommended for beginners, however, except in the matter of diction,

and is mentioned here rather by way of illustrating

the application of our system to this distinctly modern demand. In the songs which follow, my object is not at all to suggest songs for concert use but rather those only which will best serve in the all-important business of imparting a practical, working knowledge of the method. The teacher should give deep thought to this for the song is in itself the greatest single force we have at our disposal. The following may be considered absolutely safe and of a quality to appeal to the musical nature of the pupil. With these for a guide the teacher will be able to extend the list indefinitely, finally including the great classical models. Vocal adaptability is the first requirement. Literary merit in the text is also a factor which must not be overlooked. A definite melodic character is essential. Accompaniments should not be too elaborate, although they may be simplified at discretion until the song is learned and then perhaps used with advantage. A very im-  
portant point to notice is the harmonic structure which should be well-defined and broad, rather than ambitious or elaborate. Well defined rhythms are always appreciated by the singer. A good rhythmic and harmonic foundation gives the singer a feeling of security and assists him materially in keeping vocal poise. There is nothing so confusing to the young singer as crabbed, restless, illogical harmonies and rhythms.

Willeby's "Summer Rain" I have found good in that it lures to a free-flowing breath support and by its small range and favorable melodic intervals permits the indulgence of greater volume than is usually safe for beginners. A quieting and at the same time very musical song is Hammond's "Sleepy Lan'". "Thou art so like a flower" of Spencer is also favorable to the right mental attitude. Less vocal but of value on account of the words is Nevin's "Necklace of

**Love".** Both words and music of Coleridge-Taylor's "Candle Lightin' Time" are perfectly adapted to the needs of the beginner.

**The True Vocal Style.** There are three songs so marvellously well adapted to vocal study that they almost furnish a complete course in voice culture by themselves. Any singer who can handle the problems presented by these songs can "go around the world with her voice" as the saying goes. Not only are the problems typical and far-reaching in their character. They are so skillfully woven into the songs that the correct solution is almost forced upon the singer, if he has any imagination at all. They are Hawley's "Ah! 'Tis a Dream" and "To You" and Willeby's "Heart's Ease". Please note the repetition of the phrase "Ah! 'Tis a dream" and a similar repetition in the song "To You", of the words: "Into the eyes of you". The composer demonstrates his knowledge of the registers in both cases. In the first the dark rose color of the chest is exploited by a descending melody; in the other the blonde beauty of the head voice by an ascending melody. Note his cleverness in thus taking advantage *cumulatively*, of the characteristic coloring of the two registers. The effect is heightened still further by the repetition of both words and melodic figure thus enabling and really compelling the auditor to fix his entire attention upon the vocal effect.

Vocal possibilities are strikingly illustrated in "Heart's Ease", particularly as regards an intelligent use of registers. To the novice the wide intervals, sevenths frequently and once an octave and a half, would look forbidding. Close study will reveal the fact that these are amazingly easy and effective when the correct registers are used and these are so plainly demanded by the song that it is almost impossible to miss them. In other words these springs, particularly those preceded by an ascending scale are practically impossible of execution, except by correct means. Note the mad plunge from high G to low D at the end of the song. Nothing could be easier when the right registers are used (Head and Chest). This reveals an interesting fact. The Chest and Head registers are more nearly related than are Head and Medium or Chest and Medium. "Spring Night" by Hawley is also very vocal. The rather elaborate accompaniment may be simplified for beginners. Another song with an effective but easy accompaniment is Spross's famous concert song "Will 'o the Wisp". Pupils of this method will gleefully take advantage of the opportunity it affords for rapid diction. His "Yesterday and Today" is interesting musically and vocally. The downward trend of the melody is particularly favorable. The high notes must be taken

lightly. "A Dutch Lullaby" and "Lindy" by the same composer, are of totally different style but the musical settings are favorable while the words insensibly but none the less effectively enforce the right mental attitude. A similar atmosphere with an added note of graciousness and flexibility characterizes DeKoven's two songs, "Rosalie" and "Roses".

A splendid example of favorable harmonic structure is furnished by Nevin's "Silver Moon" while his "Nightingale's Song" illustrates what I have said of favorable rhythms. As if to cover all desirable features of song composition, the same composer gives us a fine example of melodic structure in his "Mon Desir". This melody with its downward trend and its favorable sequence of rising progressions, leaves nothing to be desired in the way of vocal adaptability. The accompaniment also combines pleasantly giving "aid and comfort" to the voice to a noticeable degree.

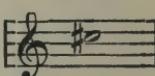
Favorable for our purpose and affording variety of style are: "Rose dreamed she was a Lily" (juvenile) by Mary Helen Brown, "Tis Spring" by Harriet Ware and "Light" by Marion Eugenie Bauer. Somewhat more difficult but very vocal is "The Wanderer" by Wachtmeister, especially good for Contraltos. Of about the same grade are: "Resignation" by William Blair and "When Thou Commandest Me to Sing" by Hammond, both well adapted to the Mezzo-soprano voice.

### REGISTERS.

Pupils of Class A, trained in the method from the start will make all the proper register adjustments merely as an indirect effect of the routine. When conditions are not so perfect and the register "idea" already exists it may be permitted to inform the pupil as to their general characteristics. The Medium permits good vowels; the Head does not, etc. The Chest flourishes best with a good strong (intense) breath pressure. The Head requires larger volume of breath with less pressure. The Medium requires more pressure than the Head. In descending scales it is bad to "carry down" the Head into the Medium octave. This is recommended by some teachers but its success would depend rather upon good luck than good management. Sometimes the pupil will happen to make just the right change, when cautioned not to change, and then all will be well. The next pupil might actually succeed in carrying down the Head and then all would be decidedly bad. A break may be developed by "carrying down" a register too low as surely as by forcing a lower too high. In a passage descending from Head to Medium it is a good plan to sing the lower register very

lightly but only on condition that the change is definitely made at precisely the right place. In descending from Medium to Chest, on the contrary, it will be found necessary in most cases to sing the Chest very full, at first, in order to insure a clear change of register. Later it will change without special attention.

It will be safe to class as Chest all pitches from D down to the end of the range, and as Head everything from C sharp upward. The balance would of course be Medium. The same classification applies to the male voice, except that the registers are less clearly defined, although treated similarly. All voices should sing the Medium lightly, especially at first. Failure to observe this caution has ruined many voices. Tenors are probably the worst sinners in this respect. Robustos particularly are capable of singing Medium almost as full as Baritones but should never do so as it has a tendency to make the voice stiff and harsh. Moreover, as the undeveloped Head voice of a Tenor is comparatively weak, it encourages forcing, which will soon put an end to his hopes of success. For the same reason the Head tones should be kept soft so as to blend imperceptibly into the Falsetto at about A flat. Tenors and Contraltos are closely related in this matter. Both are compelled constantly to use all registers and both are capable of "roaring grandly" upon occasion, but these "occasions" must not come with great frequency or register trouble will certainly develop: the most fatal trouble met with in developing a voice.



### SPECIAL PROBLEMS.

Very similar is the treatment of pupils who cannot sing *forte* or *piano* as the case may be. Where possible, it is better policy to sing piano than forte. Occasional forte singing is necessary too, for the general vigor of the organ. It wakes up the resonance centers and indirectly improves the soft work. These points are all covered, automatically, in the routine of the method. In the end the various parts of the apparatus act with such elasticity, such exactness of balance that the singer will often produce a fortissimo without at all intending to do so, or indeed, noticing that the tone was at all "loud". All the old bugaboos, such as, "carrying up too much weight" making the tone too far "back" or too "white" or "nasal, throaty, mouthy or twangy" are entirely outside our scheme also, but may be occasionally spoken of to the old singing student, just to make him feel at home and to enable him to measure his progress in the new system by means of the old landmarks, as they are successfully passed.

## COLORATURA.

One item will almost certainly need attention when the pupil is one who has previously practiced his scales and exercises with diligence. When the coloratura principle enters; that is, when a single syllable is carried through two or more pitches (as in runs) the pupil will be likely to lose placement and poise through stiffness of the apparatus, due to scale work. The only thing to do in the beginning stage is to request the pupil to produce the various pitches without even the slightest change in the position of the mouth. The result will not be ideal, musically, as the jaw should drop as the pitch rises, but it will almost certainly preserve poise and placement. The routine of the system will do the rest in good time. If the difficulty does not yield promptly it will be best to ignore the problem until the apparatus has had time to become limbered up by occupation with the consonants. It will be scarcely necessary to observe that songs employing the coloratura principle freely should be avoided until the pupil is well advanced. Please bear in mind, however, that the difficulty will not be encountered with beginning, i. e., inexperienced pupils.

Give the system time to take effect—a few months—and then try the pupil with a scale passage in a song with which she is not familiar. Play the passage just too fast for her to consciously *read* the notes. If she has time to “execute” them the ruse will fail. It is possible that she will sing the passage by “ear” alone and without a vestige of the old stiffness; quite as well as a child of four or five would, in fact. In this way the pupil may be tricked into a florid execution without ever suspecting the teacher’s cleverly masked intention. I lay the foundation for coloratura work in this unpretentious fashion, just playing the notes as they sing them, taking good care not to reveal any interest in the execution, as such. The pupil naturally imagines that she is merely learning the song. Here is where the advantage of not repeating songs too frequently comes into play. As soon as she has been over it frequently enough to feel that she has learned it, she will proceed to “execute” it, which will of course bring back all the old wooden-ness of style.

When sufficient fluency has been realized, the piano playing may be dispensed with, little by little, until the vocal scale stands alone. But remember, this will not succeed unless the songs are constantly changed. I teach the trill, when the voice is ready in much the same way, playing the trill slowly and allowing the voice to just follow

along. After a certain amount of this they will forget that the trills are to be executed rapidly and then, very likely, they will some day suddenly "explode" into the full trill, astonishing themselves quite as much as anyone else. Even then it may be spoiled if she tries to "practice" it. Greater fluency of execution will develop in the singing of wisely chosen songs. High sopranos should have such songs (coloratura) by the dozen but must never on any account be allowed to "practice" the passages. To sing them will be sufficient. If not it is a sign that not enough work is being done with the consonants. The corollary of this is that coloratura songs must be well interspersed with other kinds.

**All Registers in Constant Use.** Another point may be of value. All registers must be used constantly even from the beginning or breaks will develop. This does not mean "fretting the extremes of the voice" as Marchesi very happily puts it. They should be taken as they come in the songs studied which again emphasizes the necessity of choosing just the right kind of songs. Constantly change the style of songs as well as the songs themselves. Keep in view the fact that the conversational range is the natural "habitat" of the voice and regard excursions into the heights and depths as indulgences. By yielding to one's musical inclinations, once the essential principles are grasped, all trouble will be easily avoided.

**Hearing One's Own Voice.** Drive into the consciousness of your pupil the fact that what she thinks of her voice is not of the least importance. When she is inclined to be recalcitrant in the matter, call in other pupils and her friends, and prove by their testimony the correctness of your position. Once she has given up the hope that she can improve the tone by worrying about it, a distinct advance has been achieved. Patience with opinionated pupils is a virtue indeed, but somehow it must be "managed". Patience is never called for in the application of the system unless the pupil develops unfortunate traits of character. When these traits are very pronounced and do not yield to treatment, the teacher will do well to dismiss such pupils. They will draw an undue proportion of your nervous force and you will slight pupils more worthy of your efforts. Besides, an angelic disposition is the teacher's best asset. In the legitimate routine of teaching this method the question of patience need never come up; if you find yourself in anything less than a distinctly pleasureable frame of mind at any time, it is a sign that you have overlooked some little detail—the final D of an "and" or possibly some cleverly disguised "rogue" vowel. Track the difficulty to its lair and mutual smiles of

satisfaction will liven up the pedagogical atmosphere. Don't ask too much of your pupil. Any point which he cannot master in two or three attempts is too difficult and failure should lie at the door of teacher rather than pupil.

### VOCAL DIAGNOSIS.

The most terrible single mistake which can be made by a teacher is incorrect diagnosis. A mistake here is a mistake indeed, for it poisons all future effort, no matter how courageously put forth or how skillfully directed. The problem is in some cases so simple as to be practically non-existent. There are sopranos so high and basses so low that any intelligent street car conductor could instantly render an unfailing diagnosis. Others are so complex as to defy immediate diagnosis by the most experienced voice expert. Between the very high and very low voices lies a vast "No man's land" or rather "Any-man's land" with traps and camouflages to deceive the most wary.

The speaking voice is generally a better indication than the singing voice, because usually more natural; but even that guide is not unfailing. There are high sopranos who pitch the speaking voice too low and the huskiness and weakness which result would seem to indicate no voice at all. But it does not follow that "no voice at all" signifies a high soprano. Rich, deep contraltos who speak too high are even more convincingly of the "no voice at all" variety. A dull, characterless, hollow speaking voice generally indicates a robust tenor who talks too low or a baritone who talks too high. Bassos generally are unable to disguise the richness of their voices by bad habits of speech, but they are quite capable of arriving at a high, raucous nasal tone when all conditions are just right, or rather, just wrong.

Indefinite as the foregoing appears, it is as clear as day-light compared to the foggy realm of the singing voice. Here the desire of the singer is a powerful factor. A brilliantly colored soprano has made up her mind that, come what will, she will sing contralto. To make the matter worse, she actually succeeds in doing so for a few years, perhaps, but no voice can endure such usage and as a singer she is doomed, no matter how good her voice or method. The baritone who decides that his admiration of the tenor quality will enable him to sing tenor or the tenor who fondly imagines that he is a baritone is truly "bottling up wrath against the Day of Wrath". The physical effect of such maltreatment really gives the voice certain counterfeit qualities which an expert could scarcely distinguish from the genuine. My own par-

ticular method in such cases is to charge up any lack of vocal beauty to a mistake in diagnosis or to bad tone production. Whether it is that the vocal cords become distended by inflammation or weakened by strain (relaxed), or decorated with "nodes", or "coated", or what not, the effect is the same. It is impossible to tell anything about the voice until the cords are normal and the method of production correct. Even after these conditions have been established the effect will still be counterfeit for a considerable period. If a high voice is not crisp, clear, light and "pretty" it is *prima facie* evidence that the apparatus has been subjected to chronic violation of some sort, barring actual disease, which, however, is very rare. Thin-ness or lack of resonance furnishes absolutely no guide at all as to the kind of voice or even as to its musical possibilities. A voice may appear to be unmusical from incorrect placement or breath control. Per contra, it may sound fairly well by reason of good placement and breath control and yet be habitually used too high or too low, thus failing to realize its full beauty. Extraordinarily good organs complicate the problem still farther by sounding fairly good, although breaking every known law of tone production.

Range is an indication which would seem fairly reliable but individual variations are so great that no safe rule can be formulated. A perfectly free throat and good breath control will enable a low voice to sound surprisingly high pitches. Absence of these virtues will limit the range of a naturally high voice to a small compass in low and medium tones. All things being equal, the quality would be an unfailing indication, enabling any musical person to arrive at a fairly safe diagnosis, but "all things" are never equal, so even this means must be regarded with suspicion.

There is only one sure way to determine the voice and that is to apply the system with fidelity until such time as all the vocal requirements are fulfilled. Then and then only may we trust our ears in this all-important matter of diagnosis. In the meantime the voice may be treated conservatively as to pitch but radically as to the system. Never press the extremes of the voice in any case and most emphatically not when in doubt as to the particular kind of voice the pupil possesses. Of one thing we may be sure, I think, and that is that the pupil *has* a voice of some sort. Any failure to please musically is due to some fault in production or to lack of development.

In due time the voice will stand forth as clear as day to the most casual listener, but not unless two conditions are met and they are difficult

# TONE CHART.

EMBRACING ALL SOUNDS POSSIBLE TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

With Practical Directions for Their Execution.

	In General (Page)	At the Beginning of a Phrase (Page)	At the Close of a Phrase (Page)	Before a Vowel (Page)	After a Vowel (Page)	Before a Consonant (Page)	After a Consonant (Page)	In Word- Connection (Page)
1 A (Part).....	31	34-38	65-67	56	56	54-5	51-58	58-61
2 A (Fate).....	31	34-38	65-67	56	56	54-5	51-58	58-61
3 A (Man).....	31	34-38	65-67	56	56	54-5	51-58	58-61
4 A (Dawn).....	31	34-38	65-67	56	56	54-5	51-58	58-61
5 B (Bud).....	39-41,48	39-41,48	63-66	48,53	54-55	55-56	55-56	53-56,58-61
6 CH (Chance).....	39-41,48	39-41,48	63	48,53	54-55	55-56	55-56	54-56,58-61
7 D (Done).....	39-41,48	39-41,48	63-66	48,53	54-55	55-56	55-56	56,58-61
8 E (She).....	30	34-38	65-67	56	56	54-5	51-58	58-61
9 E (Men).....	32	34-38	65-67	56	56	54-5	51-58	58-61
10 F (For).....	39-41,48	39-41,48	63	48,53	54-55	55-56	55-56	56,58-61
11 G (Good).....	39-41,48	39-41,48	63-66	48	54-55	55-56	55-56	53-56,58-61
12 H (He).....	37	37	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	61
13 I (It).....	32	34-38	65-67	56	56	54-5	51-58	58-61
14 J (Join).....	39-41,48	39-41,48	63-66	48	54-55	55-56	55-56	53-56,58-61
15 K (Take).....	39-41,48	39-41,48	63	48,53	54-55	55-56	55-56	54-56,58-61
16 L (Love).....	39-41,45	41-42,45	63-66	41-42,51	54-55	55-56	55-56	56,58-61
17 M (Man).....	39-41,42-45	39-41,42-45	63-66	41-42,51	54-55	55-56	55-56	56,58-61
18 N (Now).....	39-41,43	39-41,43-45	63-66	52	54-55	55-56	55-56	56,58-61
19 NG (Ring).....	39-41,45	39-41,45	63-66	52	54-55	55-56	55-56	56,58-61
20 O (Boat).....	31	34-35	65-67	56	56	54-5	55-58	56,58-61
21 OO (Boot) OO (Good)	31	34-38	65-67	56	56	54-5	51-58	58-61
22 P (Cap).....	39-41,48	39-41,48	63	48-53	54-55	55-56	51-56	54-56,58-61
23 R (Roof).....	39-41,43	43,45	63-66	52	54-55	54-55	55-56	56,58-61
24 S (So).....	39-41,49	39-41,49	63	49,53	54-55	55-56	55-56	56,58-61
25 SH (She).....	39-41,49	39-41,49	63	49,53	54-55	55-56	55-56	56,58-61
26 T (Take).....	39-41,48	39-41,48	63	48,53	54-55	55-56	55-56	54-56,58-61
27 TH (This).....	39-41,44	39-41,44	63-66	52	54-55	55-56	55-56	56,58-61
28 TH (Think).....	44-45,49	44-45,49	63	49-53	54-55	55-56	55-56	56,58-61
29 U (Bud).....	32	34-38	65-67	56	56	54-5	51-58	58-61
30 V (Vim).....	39-41,43-45	39-41,43-45	63-66	52	54-55	55-56	55-56	56,58-61
31 Z (Zebra).....	39-41,43-45	39-41,43-45	63-66	44,52	54-55	55-56	55-56	56,58-61
32 Z (Azure).....	39-41,44	39-41,44	63-66	53	54-55	55-56	55-56	56,58-61

# PARTIAL LIST OF PHONETIC EQUIVALENTS

To Be Used in Connection With The Tone Chart When Necessary.

33) A	as in "About" identical with "U"	See (29)	50) O	as in "Once" identical with "OO-U"	See (21) (29)		
34) A	" Many "	" E "	" (9)	51) OU	" About "	" " A-OO "	" (1) (21)
35) AI	" Said "	" E "	" (9)	52) OW	" Now "	" " A-OO "	" (1) (21)
36) C	" Cap "	" K "	" (15)	53) OY	" Boy "	" " A-I "	" (4) (13)
37) CH	" Chicanery "	" SH "	" (25)	54) OI	" Cloister "	" " A-I "	" (4) (13)
38) D	" Matched "	" T "	" (26)	55) PH	" Phonetic "	" " F "	" (10)
39) E	" Nerve "	" U "	" (29)	56) Q	" Queer "	" " K "	" (15)
40) E	" Sew "	" O "	" (20)	57) S	" Has "	" " Z "	" (31)
41) EI	" Their "	" E "	" (9)	58) U	" Brute "	" " OO "	" (21)
42) F	" Of "	" V "	" (30)	59) U	" Use "	" " E-OO "	" (8) (21)
43) G	" Age "	" J "	" (14)	60) U	" Ab(u)le "	" " U "	" (29)
44) G	" Mirage "	" Z "	" (32)	61) W	" Now "	" " OO "	" (21)
45) I	" Circle "	" U "	" (29)	62) WH	" When "	" " H-OO "	" (12) (21)
46) I	" Light "	" A-E "	" (1) (8)	63) X	" Box "	" " K-S "	" (15) (24)
47) N	" Think "	" NG "	" (19)	64) X	" Xylophone "	" " Z "	" (31)
48) O	" Come "	" U "	" (29)	65) Y	" Fly "	" " A-E "	" (1) (8)
49) O	" Drop "	" A "	" (1)	66) Y	" Your "	" " E-OO "	" (8) (21)
				67) Y	" Booty "	" " I "	" (13)

## METHOD OF USING THE TONE CHART.

- 1) Resolve the words into their constituent *phonetic elements*. "See" it as it sounds. (See Page 117.)
- 2) Strike out all silent letters.
- 3) Underscore the Rogue Vowels.
- 4) Breathe wherever convenient, taking deliberate breath. Pause slightly before next attack. (See Breathed attack.)
- 5) Center attention on Consonants rather than Vowels.
- 6) Broaden all vowels in upper octave (above C). That is, open mouth wider.
- 7) From high B flat upward in female voices draw mouth-corners back.
- 8) Aside from the foregoing all pitches are treated exactly alike by this method.
- 9) Likewise shading (expression) may be left almost altogether to chance so far as mechanical means are concerned. Perfect execution will give perfect expression.
- 10) In general practise sing *Piano* or *Mezzo forte*. Avoid getting into ruts by occasion-indulgence in Pianissimo and Fortissimo singing but never force the feeling in the matter.

The List of Phonetic Equivalents may be consulted when necessary, which will be seldom, as the various sounds are easily identified.

The numbers above the letters refer, of course, to the corresponding numbers in the Tone Chart.

### Application of the System to the old English song "Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes."

7 23 13 47 15 26 21 17 8 20 18 16 67 61 13 27 27 46 18 65 57  
D R I N K T O M E O N L Y W I TH TH I N E E Y E S

3 18 7 46 61 13 16 22 16 9 43 61 13 27 17 46 18  
A N D I W I LL P L E D G E W I TH M I N E

4 23 16 8 30 33 15 13 24 61 13 27 46 18 27 39 36 29 22  
O R L E A V E A K I SS W I TH I N T H E C U P

3 18 7 46 16 18 49 26 1 24 15 10 4 23 61 46 18  
A N D I 'LL N O T A S K F O R W I N E

27 39 28 45 23 24 26 27 3 26 10 23 49 17 27 39 24 20 16 7 48 28 23 46 57  
T H E T H I R S T T H A T F R O M T H E S O U L D O T H R I S E

7 48 28 1 24 15 33 7 23 13 47 15 7 8 30 46 18  
D O T H A S K A D R I N K D I V I N E

5 29 26 17 46 26 46 49 42 14 20 30 57 18 9 36 26 33 23 24 13 22  
B U T M I G H T I O F J O V E S N E C T A R S I P

46 61 21 7 18 49 26 6 2 18 43 10 4 23 27 46 18  
I W O U L D N O T C H A N G E F O R T H I N E

indeed. First, the teacher must give up the idea that he *must* have a positive opinion, until the situation is ripe. Second, the pupil must make up his mind to accept the final decision and to cheerfully adjust his musical conceptions to the demands of the new voice. For instance a lyric soprano with a dramatic temperament simply must not indulge it to the full, and a dramatic soprano may as well resign all ambitions at once as to toy with the idea that she can indulge in coloratura "stunts" and the exploitation of high notes. But there is one comforting thing about this difficult subject and that is that it doesn't have to be decided at once. The probability is strong that by the time the new voice arrives the pupil will be so happy with it that no objection will be offered to the new order of things, even though contrary to former ideas and notions.

## CHAPTER XI

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE SYSTEM WITHOUT  
A TEACHER

An Attempt to Aid the Student for whom the Services of a Teacher  
Are Not Available.



DEAL use of the system would naturally imply the services of a skillful teacher, for whom the foregoing directions would be sufficient but I realize that there are many who are geographically cut off from such assistance and for their benefit I will cite typical problems and solutions. Just how much the system will do under such conditions, it is of course, impossible to say. It is conceivable however, that persons of talent, insight and determination might use it successfully. Many of our difficulties arise from cross currents of thought. Partly good methods, wholly bad methods and downright superstitious rubbish form a vocal maelstrom, in which every city student welters.

The dweller in an isolated district escapes this and if the voice is normal there is no reason why singing should not appear to him just the easiest thing in the world. By carefully heeding the various precautionary devices he may keep the voice right and as the months go on he will be confirmed as to the correctness of his practice by the improvement in his voice. Many of the cautions, warnings and exhortations in the preceding pages are solely for those having special problems due to previous indulgence in wrong vocal action. It is in the hope that some talent, otherwise born to blush unseen, may come to the light and achieve adequate vocal expression and a successful career that this chapter is written. It is largely a question of child-like literalness and exactness in following the various directions. Doubtless many a fine voice is hidden away in some remote hamlet, doomed to silence for lack of a friendly word and a few practical suggestions as to what is right and what is wrong. This chapter, which is really an afterthought, is therefore an intimate heart to heart talk with an imaginary pupil of talent who would otherwise be unable to get instruction of any kind.

**Hearing One's  
Own Voice.**

The all important first and basic idea is to kill the notion that you are supposed to produce beauty of tone. The voice may sound flat, tame and deadly uninteresting to you at first. Eventually it will take on all the hues

of the rainbow, but that is not your business. The possibility of great and thrilling song coming from your throat was all arranged ages before you were born, by the great Creative Force, call it what you will. The method is only the key which enables you to take possession of what is yours, but while the tone is not your business, you *have* a business. It is to keep your eye on the actions and reactions of lips, jaws and diaphragm. Never under any circumstances take any interest in your tone except as an outsider. Take about as much as a pupil would who is impatiently waiting for a lesson to be finished. If questioned later in regard to any particularly good or bad tone he would give the correct answer but the tone itself would have no direct personal interest for him. The tips of the fingers need never leave the diaphragm in practice and a mirror will keep the lips and jaws in order. Do not "picture to yourself a tone" or remember any other person's tone.

We have very little use for the ears in learning to sing, except in the matter of pitch. In teaching, my demonstrations are largely for the eye of the pupil. All my criticisms are based, likewise, on what I see quite as much as on what I hear. So exact do these values become that a teacher can pretty nearly "hear" the singer's tone by the eye alone and "see" his face by hearing alone. In practice both senses are used alternately and in combination, constantly, each being used as a check on the other. The pupil who is his own teacher may use the same plan, always remembering that for him the ear is less trustworthy than the eye.

Never under any circumstances copy or imitate the tone of another singer. If I had two voices, one the grandest in the world and the other below the average I would choose the latter for teaching. You have doubtless heard of great teachers who had little or no voice themselves. Their success is easily accounted for on the theory that their pupils were not betrayed into imitating their tone.

The great beauty of a voice comes into being through minute accretions during the passage of years of time. Any attempt to hasten the process will surely result in some form of forcing. By gradual

**How the Voice Improves.** accretions I do not mean that the voice will not give an impression of taking sudden jumps at times but that is probably due to the fact that some fear on the part of the pupil has delayed the effect, which thus comes all at once. Here as elsewhere treat the tone as an outside matter. The sterner your voice improves, the closer you must watch diaphragm, jaws and lips lest you insensibly change the base of your observations

from eye to ear and fall a victim to the singing mania. The situation which I most dread as a teacher arises when the pupil, after a long period of apparently little progress, suddenly finds a new and beautiful voice. It is almost impossible to keep her from "joy-riding" with it. In the twinkling of an eye coldly mechanical processes are displaced by ear-enjoyment. Trusting to the treacherous ear works well for two or three days, when it will be noted that production is no longer so delightfully easy. Then a "cold" will be suspected and before you know it the new voice will have disappeared. Recourse to the former method will bring it back quickly, but the pupil doesn't know that, and if her emotional reactions are strong she will almost certainly become discouraged and that is only a step from vocal suicide, viz., "quitting". This is why we must in all other matters cultivate the Spartan virtues, enabling us to come through such experiences safely. The most important single element in the make-up of a singer is stability of character. Without it all our good intentions will amount to nothing.

**Simplicity of the Vocal Process.**

Another bed-rock principle is a clear realization of the essential simplicity of the process. It is utterly unlike anything else in the world. The effect is so fine that it seems inconceivable that the singer does nothing but allow the breath to pass through the cords, together with certain simple movements of lips and jaws. But the gorgeous volume of intoxicatingly beautiful tone you hear from the greatest singers is exactly that and no more. What makes their voices so superior to your own is merely the fact that they have been singing in that correct way for many, many years.

**Good Immediate Results from Bad Methods.**

The greatest single danger that can menace any student arises when he discovers that he can get what he conceives to be a better tone at the moment by wrong means than by right. This is why the most musical and ambitious persons often show a strange backwardness in voice-culture. That is only another way of saying that the stupid ones have the "best" voices. Confirming that view is the fact which everyone must have observed, that the best "natural" voices seem to be allotted to persons of little ambition or brain power. It was the

**Effort Fatal.** apparently inexplicable perverseness of nature in this matter which aroused my curiosity and finally resulted in these researches. The explanation is simple. Nature did *not* give these persons the best voices. The brighter persons had the same gift but lost it through their eagerness to improve it. The lesson is

that the ambitious, driving student must, by sheer will power, arrive at the same attitude with regard to the voice that the other reaches by pure laziness.

**Legitimate Effort.** There are many other sides to the singing art, though, and in these energy and initiative and all the Spartan virtues are needed, so the fine natural voices of the phlegmatic ones are not very valuable in the realm of art. In the end ambition and determination will tell here as in all other activities, but only on condition that tone production is handled in exactly the same way that the lazy ones handle it.

In selecting songs it is best to start with those of contemporaneous composers rather than the great masters. Begin with composers whose songs are exceedingly popular for that is a pretty sure sign that they know the voice. Take songs which "sing themselves"; pursue lines of least resistance. Musical quality should be subordinated to vocal adaptability for a long time. Among great writers I would exclude for the first three years are Schubert, Schumann and Franz. Many of the songs of Brahms are favorable to the voice. Nearly all the writers of the modern French school are masters of the vocal style. My advice is to keep away from the big arias and from all Oratorio music until the method is well formed. There are several American and English song writers whose conception of the voice is exactly right. Both voice and style may be formed on these models and later when the method is unbreakable, songs may be selected for their musical value alone.

A good song to start with is Hawley's "Noon and Night". First I would go through it and mark all the "rogue" vowels, thus:

She comes not when noon is on the roses,

Too bright is day.

She comes not to the soul till it reposes

From work and play.

But when night is on the hills

And the great voices roll in from the sea,

By starlight and by candle-light and dream light

She comes to me.

The singer should also be able to "see" the song phonetically, centering the attention upon the consonants, thus:

SH-e K-u-M-Z (u) N-o-T H-oo-e-N (u) N-i-(gh)-T I-Z O-N (u) TH-e  
R-o-Z-e-Z, (u)

T-oo B-R-I-(gh)-T I-Z (u) D-a (y).

SH-e K-u-M-Z (u) N-o-T T-o TH-e S-o(u)L (u) T-i-L I-T R-e-P-o-Z..  
e-Z, (u)

F-R-o-M OO-o-R-K A-N-D(u) P-L-a(y).

Success in using the method depends entirely upon the fidelity with which the various elements are executed. Constant reference must be made to preceding chapters in which more minute directions are given. (See Tone Chart.) In this song no particular caution is necessary except possibly to pack the B in "bright" cleanly and definitely, not forgetting the tonal hyphen between "is" and "day". Also in connecting "work and" the K must not be exploded and a slight accent on the vowel may be indulged. "And the" would be connected by a tonal hyphen. "Starlight" would be rendered (1) by blowing S strongly, without reducing pressure; (2) stop flow by flipping tongue-tip to upper front teeth; (3) release it and drop jaw without checking breath or accenting vowel; (4) fix mind on the fact that you must not pronounce the A; (5) close teeth, keeping lips free; (6) roll the R, using much breath; (7) cease vibrating tongue and place it back of upper front teeth for L; (8) drop for I; (9) replace it for the final T. In all these processes breath pressure must not be relaxed or varied in the slightest degree.

**Word Connection.** When a final Explosive or Hissing consonant is followed by an initial vowel—"bright as"—"light as"—"work and" the consonant must not be exploded with full pressure or a false accent will occur thus: "brigh tas" "ligh tas" "wor kand." When an initial vowel is preceded by a Vocal consonant—"noon is" it is only necessary to release the consonant very gradually to avoid a false accent. With this one exception all consonants and vowels receive the full impact of the diaphragm. Even when consonants succeed each other as GR in "great" both can be clearly given: pack breath against back of tongue for G; release it forcefully and immediately set the tongue vibrating for R. It is customary on high pitches to interpellate the vowel U between the G and R but it will not be found necessary by students of this method.

**Placing the Voice.** This constant occupation with consonants, crisply and forcefully delivered will unfailingly "place" the voice. If it should sound breathy or husky at first, that is a sign that the diaphragm has weakened immediately or soon after the enunciation of the consonant. I have said nothing to you about registers either and for a similar reason: if directions are exactly fol-

**Registers.** lowered the voice will respond with unfailing certainty, not only where the register is plainly indicated by the pitch but also at points of cleavage. Where there is a "hole" in the voice—that is, a register or part of a register which is so weak from disuse as to be noticeably inferior to the rest of the voice, no different treatment is called for. Adhere rigidly to the method and wait for the register to grow stronger, which it will do in time but it will take some months, perhaps a year, before a decided improvement will be noted. This is the most trying situation which can arise in voice culture but patience will certainly be rewarded. Where a register is weak, it is generally true that the others are exceptionally strong and for the sake of the weaker register loud singing should not be indulged. Sometimes the register is not really weak but only appears to be so on account of wrong use. In such a case immediate results will follow correct action. All such troubles are only blessings in disguise if the pupil will hold out, for while they are being corrected the mechanics of the method will have been thoroughly mastered and any possible recrudescence of the singing mania automatically inhibited.

It may appear at first glance that this chopping up of a song would be rather annoying to the musically inclined. It is intended to be. It forces attention to matters that need attention and prevents undue concentration where that would be fatal. For instance, in this song I have put the consonants all in large letters and the vowels in small, except the initial vowels. My object in doing this is not really so much to call attention to the consonants as to keep it away from the vowels. Yet the immediate object of all these directions is to produce a beautiful vowel; everything else is secondary.

I have said nothing about expression for the simple reason that it is all a matter of diaphragmatic pressure which in the nature of things will vary from day to day according to the health. Thus **Shading.** one will become familiar with all the different degrees of "power" and will apply them automatically. On days when one has a cold or is not feeling fit for any reason, we instinctively use very little breath pressure. When feeling just right it will be so strong that the voice will *want* to come fortissimo. All is taken care of by the method, automatically.

When voiceless consonants follow each other do not slight them or try to vocalize them. For instance in Sidney Homer's "Sing to Me, Sing" occurs the word "great-throated". Do not omit either the T or the TH for the sake of keeping the tone going. Frankly stop it while

you pack the breath for the T; release and instantly place the tongue between the teeth for the TH; keep full force of diaphragm. The R which follows is a simple matter of drawing in the tongue, vibrating it forcefully and vocalizing it on a clearly thought pitch. If these consonants are omitted or blurred the diction will not be the only element which will suffer: some little contraction of the throat will almost certainly be induced before you get out into an open vowel again. It is these trifles which decide the fate of your voice in the end, for no organ can withstand these slight but frequent naggings year after year without showing the effects.

The English rendering of Leroux's "Le Nil" calls for the enunciation of "Sphinxes". That might seem a large mouthful but all doubts vanish the moment the method is applied. Taken to pieces it is only S-F-i-NG-K-S-e-Z. (See Chart.) With a good diaphragm back of it the rendering may be given easily and without loss of vocal balance.

An excellent small song is Cuthbert Wynne's "Together". This word is set to a high pitch for "geth-er", which might seem to call for the sacrifice of the G in order to get a good tone. Not so! Frankly stop the tone for an instant, while you pack the breath against the back of the tongue, simultaneously thinking the pitch with great accuracy. Suddenly drop jaw wide and let the tone go where it will. Unless you have "said" the vowel or checked or forced it will go straight up into the head where it belongs. The wide jaw will insure whatever of mouth resonance is possible and you will have sung a perfect tone, besides getting credit for dramatic force on account of the G. The steady diaphragm pressure will prevent any roughness. In the phrase "With thy heart far from mine" most singers would regard the TH(thy), which is set to a high note as impossible and so leap over it with a slight sputter, which would have no effect further than interfering with the freedom of the throat. This elision would have the further effect of over-emphasizing the vowel, producing an effect of hardness in the voice; this the singer will endeavor to mitigate and in so doing will almost certainly strain the throat.

The singer will protest that he cannot sing the TH so high but that is only a sign that he is already preparing to force the tone. (1) Sing the TH, no matter how, if only the throat is left free; (2) open mouth wide, not forgetting that the wider the opening the faster you must pour breath; see what the audience thinks of it. You will think

**Vocal Hallucinations.** you cannot sing loud enough that way, which only shows that you are suffering from the hallucination under which all singers, except the great ones, labor,

viz., that the grandeur of high tones depends upon effort. Keep singing them easily and you will note that each year they will be a little fuller and more beautiful and of richer color. Force them and you will get harsher and harsher tones and eventually lose them altogether, perhaps. The great singers appear to be forcing their top notes but that is only an effect due to the fact that they have sung them easily for so many years that they are perfectly sure of a neutral throat, and so are able to turn on more force of breath, the diaphragm having been gaining also during all those years of correct singing.

Nevin's much abused "Rosary" is another splendid example of real voice writing yet what happens to the final "Sweetheart"? Singers are so anxious to get a big effect on that high note that they sing the preceding "Cross" carelessly and with this bad start they undertake to carry the audience by the force of their own "feeling" at the climax. That is a good way to keep an audience perfectly cool, I can assure you. Try this. Sing the preceding "Cross" rather lightly and quickly (but not carelessly) to save breath and then take time to blow the S (without tone) meantime taking an extra "think" about the pitch; then sing a perfect OO, modified, of course on account of the high pitch to O; relax lips for EE, making no other change; when you are sure everything is right you may allow the breath to flow a little more rapidly, but avoid forcing; you might want to sing again, sometime. The effect may not be so thrilling to you, but I will wager that the people in the last row will think you sang "louder" than if you forced the tone.

All the Wagnerian roles are splendid practice for dramatic voices. They lure to a "full throated" outpouring of the breath and inculcate a correct idea of the fortissimo, which by the way is the first and easiest style of singing for the student whose voice is ready. This is on the principle that it is easier to throw a stone as far as you can, than to throw it exactly three fourths as far as you can. Continual indulgence in fortissimo singing may not be permitted on account of the tendency to substitute effect for cause. Very promptly the singer will imagine he is singing correctly because he is singing loudly instead of the converse, and a hallucination will begin to grow that he cannot sing correctly unless he sings full voice. This is an added reason for singing every day no matter what the state of health, laryngitis alone excepted. There will be days when you simply cannot sing full voice and other days when you can only sing pianissimo and so by the constant variation hallucinations are avoided.

Another excellent song for low voices is Frank J. Smith's "The Singing in God's Acre". The high notes do not tempt to forcing and the drift of the poem is all in the direction of quietness. In the refrain where the word "sleep" begins low and is carried up a sixth, finishing softly, an excellent opportunity is offered to verify the principle that the voice needs no help from us in long or short distance springs. By turning everything to "stone" except the diaphragm and the pitch "thinker" the higher note will surprise you by its soft yet resonant quality.

A safe song to use is "A Little Serenade" by Purdy. The melody is of a simplicity almost approaching the old models and yet so lyric that it is simply impossible to miss its lure. The words, too, with their "whispering, dreaming, kissing, smiling" etc., preclude the possibility of forcing. Some may object to the sweetness of them but they are the very people who need their quieting effect. Use key of D for all voices.

Never sing a song through twice on the same day until well advanced. Never allow a week to pass without learning some new song. Have your accompanist touch your "note" for the first few years, even at the expense of some of the accompaniment. This trains the sense of pitch and relieves the pupil of some responsibility, at the same time not allowing him to forget it altogether. If you sing without an accompanist, touch an occasional note with one finger. Never play your own accompaniment, no matter how well you play. It interferes with the action of the diaphragm in some way. Keep the en-

**Pleasing the Audience.** joying attitude. Never practice or sing with a view to pleasing people. Please yourself and let the people take it or leave it as they choose. If you are studying for the profession, all the more need of this. Trying to please the audience does not necessarily please the audience by any means and if not, then nobody is pleased; your inspiration will dry up at its source and you will join the ranks of singers who have worked and struggled in vain. Don't expect people to be forever admiring your voice. Don't expect to admire it, *always*, yourself. It has a right to its ups and downs, but whether it is up or down is not your business. Don't waste time wondering how you are getting along. That will only make you self-conscious, timid and inefficient. Hear other singers but refrain from

**Preserving the Individuality.** copying them. Above all, be exactly yourself. We fall into loose ways of comparing singers and their voices. Comparisons are utterly illogical in this field. Just as your hair, eyes and complexion, features and figure form a

combination which cannot be duplicated, so your voice, your way of looking at a song, your conception of the words, your personality all combine to produce something unique in the world. The fact that your special combination does, or does not appeal, to an individual or a group of individuals, is no proof of its excellence or lack of it. If it is *your* voice, *your* personality, *your* feeling, unadulterated by outside influences, it cannot fail to interest the discriminating auditor, for there will be no other exactly like it in the world.

THE END

**LIST OF SONGS MENTIONED**

**Page**

95	Peace.....	Hawley
97	By Moonlight.....	Hadley
97	Cradle Song.....	Mac Fadyen
98	A Little Rock.....	Wells
117	Noon and Night.....	Hawley
119	Sing to Me, Sing.....	Homer
100	The Greatest Wish in the World.....	Del Riego
101	That's The World in June.....	Spross
102	The Last Hour.....	Kramer
103	A Nocturne.....	Kramer
104	Inter Nos.....	Mac Fadyen
105	Out There the Dune.....	Spencer
105	Love is the Wind.....	Mac Fadyen
105	Summer Rain.....	Willeby
105	Sleepy Lan'.....	Hammond
105	Thou art so Like a Flower.....	Spencer
105	Necklace of Love.....	Nevin
106	Candle Lightin' Time.....	Coleridge-Taylor
106	Ah, 'Tis a Dream.....	Hawley
106	To You.....	Hawley
106	Heart's Ease.....	Willeby
106	Spring Night.....	Hawley
106	Will O' the Wisp.....	Spross
98	The Lightning Bug.....	Wells
98	The Crow's Egg.....	Wells
106	Yesterday and Today.....	Spross
107	A Dutch Lullaby.....	Spross
107	Lindy.....	Spross
107	Rosalie.....	De Koven
107	Roses.....	De Koven
107	The Silver Moon.....	Nevin
107	The Nightingale's Song.....	Nevin
107	Mon Desir.....	Nevin
107	Rose Dreamed She Was a Lily.....	Brown
107	'Tis Spring.....	Ware
107	Light.....	Bauer
107	The Wanderer.....	Wachtmeister

## LIST OF SONGS MENTIONED

107	Resignation.....	Blair
107	When Thou Commandest Me to Sing.....	Hammond
120	Le Nil.....	Leroux
121	The Rosary.....	Nevin
122	The Singing in God's Acre.....	Smith
122	A Little Serenade.....	Purdy



## INDEX OF SUBJECTS

	Page
Technique, Vocal.....	71
" Perfection Necessary.....	33
Time Required.....	16, 47
Tonal Hyphen.....	56
Tonal Rainbow Chasing.....	95
Tone, Harshness of.....	14
Tongue, On High Pitches.....	101
Vocal-Explosives.....	48
Vocal Process Illustrated.....	27
" " " Simplicity of.....	116
Vocal Mechanism.....	11, 12
Voice, Effects of Misuse.....	24
" Growth of.....	67
" Loss of.....	46
"Voiceless" Pupils.....	71-72
Voice, Physical Characteristics of.....	22
" Diagnosis of.....	111
" Improvement of.....	115
Vowels, Cultivation by.....	14
" Concealed.....	57
" Classification of.....	30
" Disguised.....	33
" Feline Quality of.....	36
" Final.....	62
" Formation of, on high pitches.....	34, 52
" Formation of, on low pltches.....	34
" Indefiniteness of.....	16
" Interpolated.....	55
" "Killing" of.....	32
" Shortened, or "Rogue".....	24
Vowel-Training by Exercises, Effect of.....	86
Vowel Diction, Harmfulness of.....	35
Wagnerian Music.....	39
Wastage of Resources.....	79
Word Connection.....	53, 58 to 61, 118
"Work" Idea Discarded.....	90
Worries of the Singer.....	57



BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 05498 379 4

Boston Public Library  
Central Library, Copley Square

Division of  
Reference and Research Services

Music Department

The Date Due Card in the pocket indicates the date on or before which this book should be returned to the Library.

Please do not remove cards from this pocket.



